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# Platonic Love<sup>1</sup>

BY HANS KELSEN

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by George B. Wilbur, M.D.

## 1. THE PROBLEM OF EROS IN PLATONIC RESEARCH

MORE than any other spiritual creations those of the great ethical teachers are rooted in their personal life — and Plato's philosophy is essentially to be understood as ethical<sup>1</sup> — every philosophical speculation on good and evil originates in the ethical experiences that entirely convulse the individual. And so also the great pathos which dominates the work of Plato, his tragic dualism and the heroic effort to overcome it, is deeply grounded in the peculiar character of this philosophical individual, in his unique fate and personal attitude to life. The Platonic life-line, however, was fundamentally conditioned by the sufferings of love, by the Platonic Eros.

The conception we are able to form of the man Plato from the documentary residue shows us no cool-contemplative scholarly nature finding its satisfactions in a keen awareness of the world, no philosophical nature whose thought and endeavor were directed at clarifying and elucidating nature as well as society, at making intelligible the confusing profusion of the given; rather does it show us a soul shaken by most powerful affects, in whom resided — allied to its Eros from which it could not be distinguished — an unsuppressible will to power over men. To educate by loving them, to love men by educating them, to establish their living together as a community based on love, those were the longings of this life, the forming of man and the reforming of his society its aim. For this reason, Plato's thinking took for its purpose nothing else than education and the state. In consequence the supreme problem became for him that of the Good: justice which is the unique justification for dominance of man over man, the only legitimization of *Paideia* not less than *Politeia*.

But the pedagogic-political accomplishments of Plato spring from the source of his Eros. When it is finally recognized that from this Eros arises the dynamics of Platonic philosophizing, then one may no longer close his eyes to the peculiarities of this Eros. For it is the peculiarity of this Platonic Eros that accounts for Plato's personal relationship to society in general

<sup>1</sup>I will demonstrate this assertion in a more detailed investigation to be published elsewhere. What follows here is taken from that work.

and to the Athenian-democratic society in particular. It accounts for his flight from this world and at the same time for his longing to dominate it in a constructive way. It is the singularity of this Eros which explains the Platonic *chorismos* and also the tendency to subdue it. Except for this especial Eros, neither the man nor his work are to be understood.

This Eros, playing such a decisive role in Plato's life and doctrines, is not the disposition we are first inclined to think of when speaking of love; it is not the somatic and spiritual propensity to reunite the beings of the different sexes, the urge which drives the masculine to the feminine, the woman to the man, and in which we are compelled to see a fundamental law of all living. The Platonic Eros is, so to speak, an exception to this law, a departure from the norm to which the great mass of mankind conforms. It is the love between beings of the same sex, in particular, it is the compulsion which drives man to men and which in the world of antiquity in certain circles was disseminated as love of youth.

It is indeed not so long ago that courage was found to go against that false prudery which pretended to believe that the Platonic Eros was no more than a metaphor for the inclination to philosophy.<sup>1</sup> But it is surely not so long ago since we have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Ed. Zeller: *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, II., 5. Aufl., p. 610. Georg Mehlis, *Die platonische Liebe*. Logos, Internationale Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie der Kultur, Band III, 1912, p. 323, interprets the Platonic Eros in the following way: "The essence of love is the longing for immortality." To Léon Robin: *La théorie Platonicienne de l'amour*, Paris, 1908, the Platonic Eros is the love of philosophy: "Néanmoins il est bien certain que l'amour des jeunes-gens dut lui sembler plus voisin qu'aucun autre de l'amour philosophique, pourvu que les inspirations auxquelles il donne lieu conservent un caractère tout moral et n'aient rien de commun avec la passion sensuelle: 'La grande raison qui fit préférer l'homme à la femme comme objet de l'amour platonique, a écrit très justement Renouvier, c'est que l'immatérialité de cet amour, qui est tout idéal quand il est ce qu'il doit être, c'est que le culte de la Science, qui en est le moyen, et la connaissance du bon et du beau, qui en est la fin, ne permettent guère qu'il se développe qu'entre deux philosophes, l'un maître, l'autre disciple (Manuel de Philos., anc. II, 104, 2). Au reste le seul amour des jeunes-gens auquel les *Lois* consentent à faire place dans la cité est celui qui a la vertu pour but et qui vise à rendre meilleur celui qui en est l'objet (VIII, 837 B-D). En résumé, l'amour tel que le comprend Platon, c'est un amour dans lequel la passion n'a point de part: qu'il ait son origine dans l'émotion qui donne naissance à l'amour charnel, soit tel que le veut la nature, soit tel que l'a fait la dépravation des mœurs, ce n'en est pas moins tout autre chose. C'est un amour qui, détourné des objets sensibles accoutumés, tend seulement vers la science et vers la vertu, ce qui, d'ailleurs, n'est pour lui qu'un seul et même but." (*op. cit.* p. 193 sq.) Further C. Ritter: *Platon, sein Leben, seine Schriften, seine Lehre*, 1910-1925, I, p. 179: "In any case, Plato sharply condemned every sort of unnatural vice, namely, pederasty in the bad

learned to understand rightly the homosexual Eros. To modern investigation which penetrates into the unconscious depths of the psyche we owe the insight that the contrast between the love for the same and for the opposite sex is in no way so sharp as had previously been believed. In the background of every human heart, behind the façade of heterosexuality lurks also homosexuality. For that reason alone no such abyss separates the allegedly normal from the so-called abnormal, as would justify the indignant scorn of the one for the other. The normal has no legitimate reason to abominate the abnormal. A psychology and characterology using more refined methods has taught us that it is just the consciousness of inclinations working against the norm which gives rise to the strongest tendencies to conform. And biographical research has shown us in increasing degree the sexually abnormal propensities of the greatest geniuses. Even a glance at the early developmental period of the most significant personalities can teach us much about how circumspect we must be in our ethical condemnation of erotic departures, how little we may identify the sexual norm with the moral norm. And although it should today be a self-evident proposition that one does not violate in the slightest degree the veneration due to a man great in the domain of the spirit, if one endeavors to reach an understanding of his Eros, since without this no understanding of his personality is possible and without this there can be no understanding of his work; and although it must today be no less self-evident that the greatness and preeminence of an historical personality can undergo no sort of detraction if one recognizes that his Eros had not gone the way of all flesh, yet even today in those circles which have done the greatest service in affording us a correct interpretation of the Eros and with it the entire work of Plato, there is still to be found an incomplete comprehension of the peculiarity of this Eros. In

sense of an unchaste sensual relationship, the meaning we are accustomed to give the word, although this as any reader of the "Phaedrus" and the "Symposium" can know, is an entirely different meaning of the word from that which applies to the relationship of Socrates or of Plato to their pupils: the significance of a group of elderly and younger like-minded and moral men striving under mutual stimulation for a common purpose." Cf. also Kurt Hildebrandt: *Uebersetzung von Platons Gastmahl* (Philosoph. Bibliothek, Bd. 81, 2. Aufl., Einleitung, p. 32). Cf. also John Jay Chapman, *Lucian, Plato, and Greek Morals*, 1931, pp. 120 sqq., and Warner Fite, *The Platonic Legend*, 1934, pp. 153 sqq. Warner Fite is one of the few authors who dare to call things by their right name. He says (p. 176): "that the Platonic spirituality is derived from pederasty."

consequence, the ultimate in understanding the essential point of the Platonic doctrines has not yet been attained. Of course, that Plato meant love, and not something essentially different, when he spoke of Eros, has been especially emphasized in this attempt at Platonic interpretation. And thus it has also been discovered that this Eros is the root of the whole Platonic philosophy. But even so what in these circles is spoken of as Platonic Eros is only approximately correct. It does not fully bring into the light its peculiarity, although it is—at least in principle—recognized. And since these interpreters aim at an apotheosis rather than at a critically objective interpretation of Plato and in particular of his social theory, this theory remains in the dark, just at the points where its understanding can be based not on the Eros in general but only on the peculiarities of the Platonic Eros.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. THE HOMOSEXUAL EROS

It is just for the relationship to society that a homosexual disposition is of the greatest significance. The awareness of "being different" induces a painful isolation, and with this there arises a certain hostile opposition to society, which, failing to comprehend fully these peculiar forms of Eros, not only scorns them but often subjects their expression to legal punishment. The violation of the legal norm which is more or less associated with the departures from the sexual norm, indeed even the awareness of inclinations towards such violation, generates the feeling of guilt and inferiority, inclines to pessimistic world-views and creates a longing for personal salvation. Even more strongly than in the case of the normal Eros, homosexual love of man produces the ambivalent tendencies to subordinate, even to sacrifice oneself to the beloved object and at the same time to dominate it, to have power over men. Thus it is characteristic of this type of Eros that it is two-valued, on the one hand directed against society, indeed world-destructive, representing a flight

<sup>1</sup>For this sort of Platonic interpretation in an especially characteristic and leading example see: Heinrich Friedemann: *Platon, Seine Gestalt*, Berlin, 1914. A comprehensive description of this tendency is given by Franz Joseph Brecht: *Platon und der George-Kreis* (*Das Erbe der Alten. Schriften ueber Wesen und Wirkung der Antike. Zweite Reihe. Gesammelt und herausgegeben von Otto Immisch. Heft XVII, Leipzig, 1929*).

from the social world, on the other hand directed also towards an enhanced attraction to society, towards acquiring power and mastery over it and towards the overcoming of the antagonism against it. In general this is a tendency to pessimistic dualism. The guilt and inferiority feelings are compensated, or better overcompensated, by a self-consciousness increased by social ambition. The political and the related pedagogic endeavors are those which especially thrive in this spiritual atmosphere; out of the same atmosphere also come the need for justification and its attendant ethical problem: the postulate of justice which serves to legitimize the fact of dominance over others.

A particular variety of this character type shows a strong tie to the father and brother, indifference, even hostility, to the mother. In the relationship to the mother sometimes lies the root of the sexual perversion. The unconquered incest wish causes the affectionate person to love in any woman only the mother and consequently forces him away from women in general and towards his own sex.<sup>1</sup> Moralistic motives then compel an ever renewed renunciation of satisfaction of the perverse impulses. This psychic situation is a constant source of nourishment to the melancholic-depressive component of the character, to the feeling of inferiority, never quite compensated by the hypertrophied self-consciousness, and to the associated inclination towards a pessimistic world view.

Frequently, in consequence of this, a certain infantilism is to be observed. It is an inability or an unwillingness to get beyond a particular level of youthful eroticism. The "eternal youth" is often a personality who has not the courage to become adult. He does not wish to be adult because he feels himself not to be a match for adults. It is for this reason that he diverts his wish to dominate over men and compel them to submit to his will on to objects which are held for some reason to be more suitable. He wants to remain in the sphere of childhood, and since he wants to domineer and educate, becomes a teacher. The pedagogic impulse very often is only a will to power turned off from the original object by the inferiority complex of the subject. Love of youth and education remain the concern of such lives who thus disguise their own situation in an ideological way. This

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Otto Rank: *Das Inzestmotiv in Dichtung und Sage*, 1912, p. 274 sqq.; Rolf Lagerborg: *Die platonische Liebe*, 1926, pp. 79, 250.



ideology holds the world of the adult to have been too much spoiled, so that it is no more possible to reform it. But if such an attitude rises above the realm of the purely pedagogical to that of politics in general, then it shows its strikingly conservative, even reactionary tendency. It is characterized by an exaggerated estimation of the past. The past: that is, for one tortured by guilt feeling and who has never been able quite to gain freedom from it by means of strong ego-consciousness and self-esteem, the days of innocent and pure childhood, watched over by a father's care. Only the remembrance, that is, the recollection of one's own childhood, is good and beautiful and consoling. To become a child again, to go back to childhood, to go back to the father or the fathers, to the paternal code, the reconstitution of the paternal authority, that is decisive also in the political field. Hence, there results from this type of Eros a basic attitude which tends to be aristocratic-conservative and anti-democratic. The characteristic of homosexuality must remain an exceptional one, it can and may not be the general rule if society is not to be destroyed (by becoming extinct). From this point of view, a social scheme must be postulated which assumes not a basic equality but an inequality; there must be special privileges, because there is a special attitude for the few who are different from the average. These, so far as they overcome their inferiority feelings and take a positive attitude to society, can do this only as they seem to themselves better than others, or more valuable than the mass. To the homosexual Eros, in view of the fundamental inequality demonstrated by his very existence, nothing can be more hateful, nothing more unnatural, nothing more unjust than the equality of democracy. On the one side he is inclined towards a thoroughly conservative, even reactionary attitude; on the other side — being ambivalent or self-contradictory — he is equally compelled to become, insofar as he seeks justice, quite revolutionary and to expect salvation from a complete overturn. That may be the psychic transformation of inner inversion, or the radical reversal of the existing legal situation whereby the first becomes last and the last first — as in the sermon of Jesus — or, whereby just that type is called to dominance which is now held to be completely unfitted: the philosopher — as in the ideal State of Plato.

## 3. PLATO'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FAMILY

WHAT we know about the life of Plato is little, and that little uncertain. His real name was Aristocles. The name "Plato," under which he acquired immortality, was given him by reason of his robust frame. His countenance, if we may judge from surviving traditions, was full, his features delicate, indeed they are represented as effeminate.<sup>1</sup> His voice is reported to have remained thin and weak. This could well have been the reason for his objection to the calling of an orator.<sup>2</sup> Of his personality, Aristotle<sup>3</sup> reports that he was a melancholic.<sup>4</sup> No one ever saw him laugh whole-heartedly in his youth, says Diogenes Laertius,<sup>5</sup> to whom we owe this verse of the poet Dexidemides:

"O Plato, all you know is how to frown with eyebrows lifted high like any snail."

"Sad like Plato" were winged words already in antiquity.<sup>6</sup> But this melancholia which casts its dark shadow repeatedly over his work, always gives way to a highly enthusiastic excitement which is not less obvious in his dialogues. And it is just this alternation which lends to the whole of the Platonic philosophy an ubiquitous air of youthfulness.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ritter *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, III, 4/5; cf. Karl Steinhart: *Platons Leben (Platons saemtliche Werke, uebersetzt von Hieronymus Mueller, mit Einleitungen begleitet von Karl Steinhart, IX. Bd., 1873, pp. 69 and 72.)*

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle: *Problemata* XXX.

<sup>4</sup> M. Pohlenz: *Aus Platons Werdezeit*, 1913, p. 129, remarks about this that the melancholy which Aristotle attributes to Plato could not have been anything like our melancholia. "Melancholy persons are *περιττοι ανδρες* in whom the black bile predominated in the composition of their bodily health and forced them to incline to abnormality, such as could lead as much to genius as to insanity and which expresses itself in some individuals in strong alternations of mood. That Plato experienced such alternations of mood we can confirm by many of his writings." Plato appears to have belonged to that type which is today called "manic-depressive."

<sup>5</sup> Diogenes Laertius III, 26/28.

<sup>6</sup> Lagerborg *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lagerborg *op. cit.*, pp. 180 sqq., 196 sqq. E. Spranger, *Psychologie des Jugendalters*, 1927, p. 193. "But with respect to the psychology of youth it must be added in particular: that at this stage of development one sees, so to speak, the off-sided origin of ideas: they live a life detached from the plane of experience, unaffected by all those little nuances and compromises which result from the application to a definite level of culture. The *χωρὶς* of the idea (its life apart) which was so strongly emphasized in Plato's middle period corresponds therefore in the highest measure to the psychic structure of adolescence. Plato's philosophy is the philosophy of an adolescent." Lagerborg believes (*op. cit.*, p. 196) that Plato's disposition can be characterized as a "repeated puberty."



Of Plato's family it is known that it was a very well established line. The father, Ariston, so it seems, was a quiet and retiring man, lost to Plato in his early youth. It may be guessed that Plato was very fond of his father. Even as a man he thinks of his father with reverence, for he lets Socrates apostrophize his two brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantos, participants in the dialogue "Republic," — by citing the poem of an admirer of Glaucon —

"Sons of Ariston, divine offspring of an illustrious hero."<sup>1</sup> Still more significant, however, is another passage in the "Republic." In one of the climaxes of this work, where he follows out to the furthest reaches of the expressible the question of the nature of the Good, he arrives at a reduplication of the object of his research. This reduplication is a typical element of every metaphysical speculation. The Good is existent in two manifestations, a transcendental and an empirical one. To describe the relationship between both, Plato finds no other expression than an allegorical one; and the allegory is very characteristic. It is the relationship of father and child. Plato says he cannot speak of the father himself, who is the invisible Good; he can speak only of the visible child of the Good. The father is here, quite clearly, God himself, God Father.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Republic (368 St.). If not otherwise stated, use has been made of B. Jowett's translations of Plato's dialogues.

<sup>2</sup> Republic (506/7 St.): "No, sweet sirs, let us not at present ask what is the actual nature of the good, for to reach what is now in my thoughts would be an effort too great for me. But of the child of the good who is likest him, I would fain speak, if I could be sure that you wished to hear — otherwise, not." The father of the child is the idea of the good, the absolute good. The ideas are known, but not seen. The child of the good is the visible good. The organ with which we see the visible things is the sight.

"But you see that without the addition of some other nature there is no seeing or being seen?

How do you mean?

Sight being, as I conceive, in the eyes, and he who has eyes wanting to see; colour being also present in them, still unless there be a third nature specially adapted to the purpose, the owner of the eyes will see nothing and the colours will be invisible.

Of what nature are you speaking?

Of that which you term light, I replied.

...

And which, I said, of the gods in heaven would you say was the lord of this element? Whose is that light which makes the eye to see perfectly and the visible to appear?

You mean the sun, as you and all mankind say.

...

... the sun is not sight, but the author of sight who is recognized by sight?

It is precisely the father whom the myth seeks to set aside. The Hero and Redeemer have no, or at least no earthly, father. And thus it was that (not long after Plato's death) it became the fashion in Athens to speak of the philosopher as having sprung from his mother's immaculate conception. Not Ariston, but the God, Apollo, was the true father.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship to his brothers seems to have been good, especially to the younger one.<sup>2</sup> Plato in his works displays the effort to preserve the remembrance of the male kinsmen of his family. He also immortalizes his half-brother Antiphon (in "Parmenides"). For one of his uncles, the brilliant Critias, he retained an ardent veneration.<sup>3</sup> Women on the other hand play no part in Plato's life.<sup>4</sup> There is left in all his works no trace of the relationship to his mother, Perictione, whose second marriage was to the politician Pyrilampes; unless we believe Wilamowitz-Moellendorff<sup>5</sup> who conjectures that the only woman described by Plato, the ambitious wife characterized in the VIIIth book of the "Republic," is a portrait of the philosopher's mother. There, it is a matter of "the young son of a brave father" who, because he "dwells in an ill-governed city," takes whatever happens to him quietly "instead of battling and railing in the lawcourts or assembly"; and of a mother who complains "that her husband has no place in the government, the consequence

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True, he said.

And this is he whom I call the child of the good, whom the good begat in his own likeness, to be in the visible world, in relation to sight and the things of sight, what the good is in the intellectual world in relation to mind and the things of mind . . ."

Matthew XI, 27: "All has been handed over to me by my Father: and no one knows the Son except the Father — nor does any one know the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

<sup>1</sup> Diogenes Laertius (translated by R. D. Hicks. The Loeb Classical Library.) III, 1, tells "that there was a story at Athens that Ariston made violent love to Perictione, then in her bloom (*ᾠπαλὰν οὖσαν*), and failed to win her; and that, when he ceased to offer violence, Apollo appeared to him in a dream, whereupon he left her unmolested until her child was born." By the term "*ᾠπαλὰν*" Diogenes or his authority probably intended to express, in a metaphorical way, Perictione's pregnancy. This was obviously the true motive of her refusing sexual intercourse to her husband. Cf. Steinhart *op. cit.* pp. 35, 281. Cf. also Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, *The Son of Apollo. Themes of Plato*, 1929, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon*, Erster Band, 1919, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 507.

<sup>4</sup> Steinhart expresses it (*op. cit.*, p. 166) by saying that "even the malicious tittle-tattle of his opponents knew nothing to make tales of in respect to his erotic relations to women." Cf. also Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *op. cit.*, p. 429.

of which is that she has no precedence among other women." Also he is "not very eager about money . . . his thoughts always center in himself, while he treats her with considerable indifference," and she, deeply annoyed by all this, says to her son "that his father is only half a man and far too easy-going; adding all the other complaints about her own ill-treatment which women are so fond of rehearsing." Through such an influence, father and son are not led in the end to the best results. And perhaps one may wish to see a slight indication in the very striking description of the tyrannical character given in the IXth book of the Republic.<sup>1</sup> Plato there speaks of such intimate concerns of the mind that one would be warranted in surmising self-confession, even had he not himself referred to it in saying that this whole estimate could only come from one who has clear insight into this type of character.

"The judgment is given . . . by one who is able to judge, and has dwelt in the same place with him, and has been present at his daily life and known him in his family relations . . ."

Surely, Plato, here as well as also in the immediately following comments in which Socrates assumes himself and his audience to have been people who have had to do with tyrants before now, wished to refer, but only secondarily, to experience with contemporary events. The tyrannical character, the fatal root of which he declares to be the urgent passions of the tyrannical Eros, may well be Plato's own hated and repressed second self. Only of this can he properly and in the deepest sense say that he "dwells in the same place with him." When he characterizes in his "Hippias Major," the conflict between a higher and a lower self in the breast of Socrates he has him speak of himself as of a double. Socrates says of his second self:

"He is my nearest relation and lives in the same house with me. When I come home, and he hears me speak, he asks me, whether I am not ashamed of myself . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Of what other tyrant than the one in his own breast can Plato

<sup>1</sup> Republic (577 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Hippias Major 304 D. Cf. also O. Apelt's translation of "Hippias Major," Philosophische Bibliothek, Bd. 172 a, 2. Aufl., 1921, p. 6; and a similar remark in the Dialogue "Laws," 873 C, where Plato describes the suicide with the words: "And what shall he suffer who slays him who of all men, as they say, is his own best friend?"

speak when he characterizes him primarily by his dreams which are so criminal that they could be known to the dreamer alone? It is the dream of which Plato speaks when he says:

"there is no conceivable folly, or crime . . . which at such a time when he has parted company with all shame and sense, a man may not be ready to commit."

And among all crimes there stands first:

"incest with his mother or any other unnatural union."

If it were not his own mind that Plato thus discloses, his own most hidden wishes, for which he punishes himself by confessing them, how then would one understand this:

"In saying this I have been running into a digression; but the point which I desire to note is that in all of us, even in good men, there is a lawless wild-beast nature which peers out in sleep."<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. PLATO'S ATTITUDE TO WOMEN

YET IT is not necessary to rely on such weak support to recognize fully Plato's devious attitude towards woman as a mate and especially as mother. For the value or lack of value which Plato accords to her receives a clear illumination from the consideration to which side he places her in the two-sided world picture of the Platonic ethical speculations. Although Plato does not expressly say this, there can be no doubt that he recognizes in the masculine principle the good, and in the feminine the evil.

(a) "*Philebus*" and "*Timaeus*." In the "*Philebus*" where the conflict of good and evil is described in terms of the subordination of pleasure to reason, the latter appears as a male, the former as a female divinity. She is assigned to the domain of the becoming, as well as to that of the limitless, the unbounded (*ἄπειρον*) both of which belong to the realm of evil in contrast to that of the idea, the good.<sup>2</sup> In the creation myth of the "*Timaeus*," Plato endeavors to conceive of the empirical world of coming into being as a mixture of the being, the Idea, which is for him the good, and of matter, which here plays a role analogous in

<sup>1</sup> Republic (571-2 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Philebus (28 St.); cf. also Friedemann *op. cit.*, p. 99: "As an element pleasure is an 'apeiron' (unlimited). Apeiron and pleasure are unbounded, passive and feminine . . ."

earlier dialogues to the not-being, which — according to Plato — represents the evil. He compares the being, the idea, the primal unchanging pattern, to the father, and matter which here appears in place of not-being, that in which things come into being, the substratum, to the mother.<sup>1</sup> And quite similar are the roles divided up in the myth of the birth of Eros as told in the "Symposium." His father is Poros or Plenty, the son of Discretion or Metis; the mother, however, is foolish Penia or Poverty. She tricks the drunken Plenty into intercourse, as the result of which Eros is conceived as the child of a father "wealthy and wise" and of a mother "poor and foolish." The sex act occurs only against the will of the man, everything good in its result comes from the father, everything bad from the mother.<sup>2</sup>

But still more clearly expressed is Plato's sexual-philosophical estimation of woman in his doctrine of the transmigration of souls, as, for example, in two different places of the "Timaeus." In the first, it says that in the creation of the world a soul came from every star. The incarnation, that is to say, earthly birth, takes place in such a manner that souls first of all become men. The first of mankind is consequently masculine, yet there is already passionate love in this womanless society. If these male human beings succeed in dominating their passions, i.e., lead a proper life, their souls return again to their stars; but if they are dominated by their passions, lead an improper life, then

"at the second birth he would pass into a woman, and if, when in that state of being, he did not desist from evil, he would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature which he had acquired, and would not cease from his toils and transformations until he followed the revolution of the same and the like within him, and overcame by the help of reason the turbulent and irrational mob of later accretions . . . and returned to the form of his first and better state."<sup>3</sup>

The existence of women is thus directly interpreted as punishment for the sins of the men. In the first state of innocence,

<sup>1</sup> Timaeus (50 St.): "For the present we have only to conceive of three natures; first, that which is in process of generation; secondly, that in which the generation takes place; and thirdly, that of which the thing generated is a resemblance. And we may liken the receiving principle to a mother, and the source or spring to a father, and the intermediate nature to a child . . ." (49 St.) compares matter as substratum of generation to "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation."

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (203/4 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Timaeus (41/2 St.). Cf. also Lagerborg *op. cit.*, p. 25.

mankind is man, the closest approach still to godhood. In the Platonic paradise there are only men.

In the final chapter of the dialogue about the creation of the world, Plato returns a second time to this descent of souls from men to women and from women to animals, and here he says:

"Of the men who came into the world, those who were cowards or led unrighteous lives may with reason be supposed to have changed into the nature of women in the second generation. And this was the reason why at that time the gods created in us the desire of sexual intercourse, contriving in man one animated substance, and in woman another."<sup>1</sup>

The separation into two sexes and the urge to sexual reproduction, which ties the man to a woman incarnating an evil soul, is here — not the cause, but — the result of the fall of man.

In the physiology and anatomy of the two sexes which here follow Plato stresses:

"in men the organ of generation becoming rebellious and masterful, like an animal disobedient to reason, and maddened with the sting of lust, seeks to gain absolute sway."

Of the feminine sex organ, however, he says that

"the animal within them is desirous of procreating children."

Only in the case of women, not in that of men, is the sexual urge one for the procreation of children. Here, in the transmigration from man to animal the woman seems not necessarily to be an intermediate link; for Plato says, following his description of the generation of woman:

"Thus were created women and the female sex in general. But the race of birds was created out of innocent light-minded men, who, although their minds were directed toward heaven, imagined, in their simplicity, that the clearest demonstration of the things above was to be obtained by sight; these were remodeled and transformed into birds, and they grew feathers instead of hair. The race of wild pedestrian animals, again, came from those who had no philosophy in any of their thoughts . . . And the most foolish of them, who trail their bodies entirely upon the ground and have no longer any need of feet, he made without feet to crawl upon the earth. The fourth class were the inhabitants of the water: these were made out of the most entirely senseless and ignorant of all, whom the transformers did not think any longer worthy of pure respiration, because

<sup>1</sup> *Timaeus* (90-92 St.)



they possessed a soul which was made impure by all sorts of transgression; . . . and hence arose the race of fishes and oysters, and other aquatic animals, which have received the most remote habitations as a punishment of their outlandish ignorance. These are the laws by which animals pass into one another, now, as ever, changing as they lose or gain wisdom and folly."<sup>1</sup>

In this exposition of the doctrine of transmigration the situation seems to be that being reborn as a woman is the punishment for frivolity and immorality; rebirth as an animal, however, is the punishment for stupidity and folly.

(b) *The "Republic."* These views of Plato as to the identity or even affinity of the woman to the principle of evil appear to be incompatible with the place he gives her in the ideal state of the "Republic." Within the order which there pertains to the master class of the warriors and of the philosophers arising in this class, women are represented as fundamentally equivalent to men; they have the same functions as men, in particular as regards military service. But this equality of women does not rest on a recognition by Plato of an equal worth of the feminine sex; on the contrary, it rests on his ignoring the woman as such. He does not acknowledge, nay he even denies to her any sexual peculiarity. For him, there is no perception of any difference. This is shown clearly enough when Plato seriously proposes:

"the sight of women naked in the palestra, exercising with the men," he considers as sufficient justification for this that not only should it apply to the younger women, but also for the

"no longer young; they certainly will not be a vision of beauty, any more than the enthusiastic old men who in spite of wrinkles and ugliness continue to frequent the gymnasia."<sup>2</sup>

The same sexual indifference to the woman is seen in the argument with which he defends the equality of women against certain objections. Thus: if men of the master class must be like "guardians of the herd" — theirs is the essential function of the watchdogs — there is no visible reason why women should not also fill the same role; for

"Are dogs divided into hes and shes, or do they both share equally in hunting and in keeping watch and in the other duties of dogs?

<sup>1</sup> *Timaeus* (90-92 St.)

<sup>2</sup> *Republic* (452 St.). Cf. also Lagerborg *op. cit.*, p. 13/4.

or do we entrust to the males the entire and exclusive care of the flocks, while we leave the females at home, under the idea that the bearing and suckling their puppies is labor enough for them?"<sup>1</sup>

When Plato decisively negates this question and explains that it is only necessary to take into consideration the weaker constitution of women, then the decisive idea is: that even with female dogs the bearing and rearing of the young determines no fundamental difference in use. And still more oblivious of the essential sexual difference is the argument that the difference between man and woman is no other than, and in consequence rates just as little consideration in the attitude towards the place of woman in the social structure, as does that between bald-headed men and hairy men.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that the whole institution of communism of women and children which Plato prescribes for the master class in his ideal state is a bit of doctrine which must have sprung from no very deep experience of a love relationship to a woman, nor of an experience of intimate participation in marriage and family life which would have afforded a counterpoise. But an even clearer indication than the abstract institutions of the Platonic ideal state is given by a detail that creeps into his description of the communism in children.

When someone makes the proposal that

"the wives of our guardians are to be common, and their children are to be common,"

and that these children after birth shall be taken over by the constituted authorities: what objection must he expect if he presupposes no less maternal feeling in the mothers than such as can be observed among the animals? That the mothers will not give over their children to the state authorities, that, at least, they will suckle their own. And the statesman who will not let this primitive urge be effective must above all take care that the mothers may not know their own children. But Plato believes it only necessary to demand that

"no father (*γυνεύς*) is to know his own child, not any child his father."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Republic (452 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (454 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (457 St.)



Of the mother, not a word. The man who is silent about her here shows that nature has denied him all knowledge of motherhood and with it the understanding of one of the most powerful forces in social life. Consequently, Plato in his "Republic" does not consider the relations between men and women as any different from those between male and female animals. In relation to women he takes the same attitude that an animal breeder does to his animals. In his "Laws" also, although he drops the notion of communism in women and reinstates the institution of marriage, he places this institution under a state control which would violate every normal feeling.

(c) *The myth of the "Statesman."* His most intimate relation to this problem as to many others is disclosed, however, in myth. In the myth of the "Timaeus" — previously referred to — it must strike us that in the human species arising from the first incarnation of souls, there can be no sexual propagation at all, since this species consists only of men. In the great myth of the "Statesman," however, which also describes a cosmogony, sexual propagation is expressly excluded in the Golden Age, the needs of men being amply provided for without any co-operation on their part. This period corresponds approximately to the period of masculine humanity of the "Timaeus." In place of sexual propagation, a most remarkable substitute is provided. It is related<sup>1</sup> that the world once stood under the guidance of God, then later only under its own inherent powers, when God took his hand off the helm and left the world to its own devices. The motion completing itself under the guidance of the divine hand leads to good, the other to evil. If the evil increases to the extreme, God again takes over the government and turns the world in the opposite direction. The reversal of motion signifies a complete reversal of all relationships. Among these, sexual propagation plays a most significant role. Here the problem is treated in an especially detailed manner, and stands at the center of the whole myth. It is striking that sexual generation falls in the evil period when things move of themselves and everything "follows its own impulses." And so also must men in this period "through their own powers and through the influence of the same forces" — which are forces of evil directed towards evil —

<sup>1</sup> Statesman (269 sqq. St.)

"procreate and nurture"<sup>1</sup> just as they must care for their other interests by their own efforts and their own powers. Since the reversal brought about by God's resumption of control is a reversal from evil to good and hence signifies a complete turning about of all relationships previously abandoned by God and left to men's own devices, the devices of evil in a neglected world, there can be no sexual generation under the divine guidance. Not as a consequence of the sex act are men born, nor do they issue as children from their mother's womb, in order gradually to become older, to die and to be buried in the earth; on the contrary, it is exactly the reverse: from the earth arise men who are graybeards, who gradually become younger and finally fall back into the earth as seed. With the regression of the adults to the state of childhood is associated the idea that there

"follows the return of the dead, who are lying in the earth, to life; simultaneously with the reversal of the world the wheel of their form and generation has been turned back, and they are put together and rise and live in the opposite order."<sup>2</sup>

There appears here then a resurrection of the dead in addition to the original genesis from the earth. Both together replace the sexual propagation by which mankind has begotten one of another. That in the mythical paradise of the "Statesman" there were no women, is not asserted, but it is evident that women were here superfluous: propagation took place without them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statesman (274 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Statesman (271 St.)

<sup>3</sup> That sexual propagation begins only with the beginning of the second world epoch, is old Iranian doctrine. Moreover, the myth in the "Statesman" shows other elements which probably indicate the effect of old-Persian religions on Plato. Cf. R. Reizenstein, *Platon und Zarathustra*. Vortraege der Bibliothek Warburg 1924/25, 4. Bd., 1927, pp. 32 sqq. From this influence are to be explained certain striking parallels existing between the Platonic myth and Jewish-Christian doctrine of a Messianic kingdom, an age of righteousness which will follow on a Satanic period of evil. Cf. especially Matthew XXII, 30: "At the resurrection (of the dead) people neither marry nor are married, they are like the angels of God in heaven"; and Matthew XIX, 10-12: "The disciples said to him: 'If that is a man's position with his wife, better not marry at all!' He said to them: 'True, but this truth is not practicable for everyone, it is only for those who have the gift. There are eunuchs who have been eunuchs from their birth, there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Realm of heaven. Let anyone practice it for whom it is practicable.'"

# 5. THE YOUTH-LOVING EROS

THAT Plato not only had no comprehension of the sexual peculiarities of women, but that love of women must have been completely foreign to him, can be inferred from the fact that he who speaks so much of love, who gives love so prominent a place not only in the life of the individual but in the whole of the universe as well, has in mind, exclusively and always, love of youth. That the Eros of Plato is not what we today call friendship, that it is even on the highest spiritual plane something which has a most explicit sexual basis, that it is a sexual Eros which plays the chief role in his life and doctrines cannot be doubted in the least.<sup>1</sup> Only too clearly, in no other point so clearly, is this the message of his dialogues.

(a) "*Charmides*" and "*Lysis*." From personal experience alone Plato could give the realistic description, in "*Charmides*," of the feeling which seized on Socrates at the sight of the beautiful youth. The scene preceding the appearance of Charmides is already full of eroticism. As a good dramatist, Plato first sends on the stage a crowd of lovers of the boy. When he himself, the well-beloved, then comes, everyone attempts to make place for him beside himself. Plato has Socrates say, the adult Socrates among the enamoured youths,

"Great amusement was occasioned by every one pushing with might and main at his neighbour in order to make place for him next to themselves, until at the two ends of the row one had to get up and the other was rolled over sideways. Now I, my friend, was beginning to feel awkward; my former bold belief in my powers of conversing with him had vanished. And when Critias told him that I was the person who had the cure, he looked at me in such an indescribable manner, and was just going to ask a question. And at that moment all the people in the palaestra crowded about us, and, O rare! I caught a sight of the inwards of his garment, and took the flame. Then I could no longer contain myself. I thought how well Cydias understood the nature of love, when, in speaking of a fair youth, he warns some one 'not to bring the fawn in the sight of the lion to be devoured by him,' for I felt that I had been overcome by a sort of wild-beast appetite."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for this E. Bethe, *Die dorische Knabenliebe, ihre Ethik und ihre Idee*. Rheinisches Museum. Neue Folge. 62. Bd., 1907, pp. 438 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Charmides* (155 St.)

Sensuality is also the nucleus of the friendship which forms the theme of "Lysis."<sup>1</sup> This friendship is the Eros of the "Symposium" and of "Phaedrus," is the παιδεραστία, in its particularity for Plato so painful and so rapturous.

The passion of Hippothales for Lysis, which forms the point of departure for the dialogue on friendship named after the beautiful youth, is described in quite unmistakable fashion as sexual. The normally disposed individual must exert himself not to see a maiden in the love object of Hippothales from the description given by Plato of the symptoms. The state of the youth shows all the typical signs of sexual excitement: bashful blushing, coy ardour, wishes to protect the longed-for object, inability to see him in other than a rosy light, etc.<sup>2</sup> The relation of the obviously sexually beloved Hippothales is clearly contrasted with the unsensuous association between Lysis and Menexenos as true friendship, while that to Hippothales is called "true love." And with this, Plato has Socrates say frankly "the lover, who is true and no counterfeit, must of necessity be loved by his love."

After this remark of Socrates'

"Lysis and Menexenos gave a faint assent to this; and Hippothales changed into all manner of colours with delight."<sup>3</sup>

(b) "*Phaedrus*." Love of youth is what the participants in the "Symposium" set themselves to glorify, and to this topic Plato definitely returns in the "*Phaedrus*." Even more clearly than in any other dialogue, in the second of these two essays on love shines through the sexual component of the Platonic Eros. It declares itself as the essential element, as the fundamental basis, as the culture medium from which springs the spiritualized Eros. The passionate description of erotic sentiments felt at the sight of a beautiful boy is one of the most sublime love poems,

<sup>1</sup> P. Friedlaender, *Platon II* (Die platonischen Schriften), 1930, p. 102, observes of this dialogue that it shows the "philosophical" Eros "at the level of Plato's early work. That behind the *Philia* of this dialogue is really hidden Eros — 'when these friendships become excessive we term the excess love,' it runs in the "*Laws*" (837 St.) — is betrayed from the beginning. From the first words the atmosphere of παιδικός "Eros is perceptible."

<sup>2</sup> *Lysis* (203/207 St.)

<sup>3</sup> *Lysis* (222 St.) W. R. M. Lamb (The Loeb Classical Library) translates: "Then the genuine, not the pretended, lover must needs be befriended by his favourite."

filled with sensuality, in its artistic beauty a remarkable account of sexual longing. The Eros which the sight of the beautiful youth awakens is here interpreted as a reminiscence of the vision of absolute beauty in the beyond, to which the winged soul was exposed before its birth. The beauty of a boy's body is the reflection of eternal beauty. For this reason,

"at first a shudder runs through the lover, and again the old awe steals over him; . . . then while he gazes on the beloved, there is a sort of reaction, and the shudder passes into an unusual heat and perspiration; for as he receives the effluence of beauty through the eyes, the wing moistens and he warms."

In the love of a beautiful youth, the soul of man begins again to grow wings.

"And as he warms, the parts out of which the wing grew, and which had been hitherto closed and rigid, and had prevented the wing from shooting forth, are melted, and as nourishment streams upon him, the lower end of the wing begins to swell and grow from the root upwards; and the growth extends under the whole soul — for once the whole was winged."

Then is described the alternation of pleasure and anguish produced by love:

"And from the mingling of the two feelings the soul is oppressed at the strangeness of her condition, and is in a great strait and excitement, and in her madness can neither sleep by night nor abide in her place by day. And wherever she thinks that she will behold the beautiful one, thither in her desire she runs. And when she has seen him, and bathed in the waters of desire, her constraint is loosened, and she is refreshed, and has no more pangs and pains; and this is the sweetest of all pleasures at the time and is the reason why the soul of the lover will never forsake his beautiful one, whom he esteems above all; he has forgotten mother and brothers and companions, and he thinks nothing of the neglect and loss of his property; the rules and proprieties of life, on which he formerly prided himself, he now despises, and is ready to sleep like a servant, wherever he is allowed, as near as he can to his desired one, who is the object of his worship, and the physician who can alone assuage the greatness of his pain. And this state, my dear imaginary youth to whom I am talking, is by men called love, and among the gods has a name at which you, in your simplicity, may be inclined to mock; . . ."

And with this, Plato cites from the "apocryphal writings of Homer" a verse which says:

"Mortals call him (Eros) 'fluttering Love,' but the Immortals call him 'The Winged One' (Pteros) because the growing of wings is a necessity (*πτεροφύτωρ ἀνάγκη*) to him."<sup>1</sup>

"Pteros" is a play on the name of "Eros," and the last words, taken literally, may perhaps have an obscene connotation. It is not improbable that the questionable verse is Plato's own, and is only given the appearance of being cited.<sup>2</sup> To be sure here in the "Phaedrus" — as elsewhere when Plato speaks of love — the condition is maintained that sexual gratification is given up. But not only is a description of the erotic object which reaches the very limit of obscenity, almost a substitute for the renounced gratification; Plato's description becomes, through the interpolation of retarding elements, an exquisitely downright description of sexual pleasures which surmount all inhibitions until they finally arrive at the desired goal. With a vividness which could only come from his own experience, the struggle between moral sentiments and the sensual desires is pictured. The soul is compared to a span of horses, one good, the other bad, symbolizing reason guided by morality and urges impelling towards immorality.

"Now when the charioteer beholds the vision of love, and has his whole soul warmed through sense, and is full of the prickings and ticklings of desire, the obedient steed, then as always under the government of shame, refrains from leaping on the beloved; but the other, heedless of the pricks and of the blows of the whip, plunges and runs away, giving all manner of trouble to his companion and the charioteer, whom he forces to approach the beloved and to remember the joys of love. They at first indignantly oppose him and will not be urged on to do terrible and unlawful deeds; but at last, when he persists in plaguing them, they yield and agree to do as he bids them."

When at last the charioteer succeeds in subduing them, the one steed is overcome

"with shame and wonder, and his whole soul is bathed in perspiration; the other . . . is full of wrath and reproaches, which he heaps upon the charioteer and his fellow-steed, for want of courage and

<sup>1</sup> Phaedrus (251-255 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Notes to Ritter's translation of "Phaedrus" in: Philosophische Bibliothek, Bd. 152, 2. Aufl., 1922, p. 129. According to Ritter, Plato uses the term *πτεροφύτωρ ἀνάγκη* only to describe "the power of love which inspires men to rise into the transcendental realm."



manhood, declaring that they have been false to their agreement and guilty of desertion. Again they refuse, and again he urges them on, and will scarce yield to their prayer that he would wait until another time. When the appointed hour comes, they make as if they had forgotten, and he reminds them, fighting and neighing and dragging them on, until at length he on the same thoughts intent, forces them to draw near again. And when they are near he stoops his head and puts up his tail, and takes the bit in his teeth and pulls shamelessly."

But again the charioteer succeeds in reining in the bad steed, so that it is almost "ready to die of fear" when it sees the beautiful youth. Yet this victory of the charioteer and his noble steed is no final one. Only now is described how the beautiful youth himself is affected by Eros. When the lover and the beloved have for a long time been associated with each other, when

"this feeling continues and he is nearer to him and embraces him, in gymnastic-exercises and at other times of meeting, then the fountain of that stream, which Zeus when he was in love with Ganymede named Desire, overflows upon the lover, and some enters into his soul, and some when he is filled flows out again; and as a breeze or an echo rebounds from the smooth rocks and returns whence it came, so does the stream of beauty, passing through the eyes which are the windows of the soul, come back to the beautiful one; there arriving and quickening the passages of the wings, watering them and inclining them to grow, and filling the soul of the beloved also with love. And thus he loves, but he knows not what; he does not understand and cannot explain his own state; he appears to have caught the infection of blindness from another; the lover is his mirror in whom he is beholding himself, but he is not aware of this. When he is with the lover, both cease from their pain, but when he is away then he longs as he is longed for, and has love's image, love for love (Anteros) lodging in his breast, which he calls and believes to be not love but friendship only, and his desire is as the desire of the other, but weaker; he wants to see him, touch him, kiss, embrace him, and probably not long afterwards his desire is accomplished. When they meet, the wanton steed of the lover has a word to say to the charioteer; he would like to have a little pleasure in return for many pains, but the wanton steed of the beloved says not a word, for he is bursting with passion which he understands not; — he throws his arms round the lover and embraces him as his dearest friend; and, when they are side by side, he is not in a state in which he can refuse the lover anything, if he ask him; although his fellow-steed and the charioteer oppose him with the arguments of shame and reason."

Plato did not end his description of this struggle — in which those bookworms completely estranged from life or lying bigots can

see anything else rather than the conflict over the satisfaction of the sexual impulse — with the exclusive victory of the good steed. He also had in mind that

"after wine or in some other careless hour, the two wanton animals take the two souls when off their guard and bring them together, and they accomplish that desire of their hearts which to the many is bliss; and this having once enjoyed they continue to enjoy, yet rarely because they have not the approval of the whole soul."<sup>1</sup>

It is the same Eros which, overcoming sensuality, and "having conquered in one of the three heavenly or truly Olympian victories," gains all the blessings that "human discipline or divine inspiration (can) confer . . ." and which "accomplishes that desire which to the many is bliss."

(c) "*Republic*." Even in the "*Republic*" which does not have as its main theme an erotic topic as does "*Lysis*," "*Symposium*" and "*Phaedrus*," there is clearly revealed — when Plato speaks of it — a love of youth which only suppresses its sensual aspect with effort. In a discussion concerned with rules which have the purpose of augmenting the bravery of the warriors in the ideal State, Plato — through the mouth of Socrates — suggests:

"The hero who has distinguished himself . . . shall receive honour in the army from his youthful comrades: every one of them in succession shall crown him."

That this army of the ideal State was constituted of women as much as of men seems to have been forgotten here. Socrates continues after an affirmative expression of Glaucon's

further he shall be honoured "by receiving the right hand of fellowship",

to which Glaucon replies,

"to that too I agree."

Socrates: "But you will hardly agree to my next proposal,"

which is meant jokingly, since Glaucon is characterized as a "man of pleasure."<sup>2</sup>

Glaucon: "What is your proposal?"

Socrates: "That he should kiss and be kissed by them."

<sup>1</sup> *Phaedrus* (254-256 St.)

<sup>2</sup> *Republic* (474 St.)



Glaucou: "Most certainly, and I should be disposed to go further, and say: Let no one whom he has a mind to kiss refuse to be kissed by him while the expedition lasts. So that if there be a lover in the army, whether his love be youth or maiden, he may be more eager to win the prize of valor."<sup>1</sup>

Observe how very tiresomely this "or maiden" limps in after a handshaking and kissing between youths had been the only thing spoken of. For this reason no particular significance can be assigned to the circumstance that Socrates agreeing with Glaucou explains that

"the brave man is to have more wives than others,"

and thus raises the consideration of having a good progeny.

That the Platonic Eros is nothing but homosexual love is shown by the way Plato interprets the term "philosopher" in his main thesis: that the philosopher ought to govern the state. The word φιλοσοφία means the love of wisdom; but this love is presented by Plato as the love of youth as the only form of love. Socrates aims at showing that the philosopher is filled with a desire for the whole of wisdom, not just a part, and declares that when we say of a person that he loves something (φιλεῖν), that means that he does not love a certain quality of the beloved, but has taken him into his heart entirely. And when Glaucou desires a further characterization Socrates illustrates his assertion not by recalling how a devoted youth takes a girl completely and in every feature and falling into his heart, but thus:

"that all who are in the flower of youth do somehow or other raise a pang or emotion in a lover's breast, and are thought by him to be worthy of his affectionate regards. Is not this a way which you have with the fair: one has a snub nose, and you praise his charming face; the hook-nose of another has, you say, a royal look; while he who is neither snub nor hooked has the grace of regularity; the dark visage is manly, the fair are children of the gods; and as to the sweet 'honey pale,' as they are called, what is the very name but the invention of a lover who talks in diminutives, and is not averse to paleness if appearing on the cheek of youth? In a word, there is no excuse which you will not make, and nothing which you will not say, in order not to lose a single flower that blooms in the spring-time of youth."<sup>2</sup>

In the third book, the talk is of "true love." And when Plato

<sup>1</sup> Republic (468 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (474 St.)

makes Socrates demand that this love to be "true" must be free from all sensual pleasure, one might believe at first that also he has in mind the love existing between man and woman.

"Then mad or intemperate pleasure must never be allowed to come near the lover and his beloved; neither of them can have any part in it if their love is of the right sort."<sup>1</sup>

Obviously Plato here has only in mind love of youth; accordingly he goes on suggesting that in the ideal state the following regulation be introduced:

"A friend should use no other familiarity to his love than a father would use to his son, and then only for a noble purpose, and he must first have the other's consent; and this rule is to limit him in all his intercourse, and he is never to be seen going further, or, if he exceeds, he is to be deemed guilty of coarseness and bad taste."<sup>2</sup>

It is in fact only homosexual love of which Plato exacts withholding from instinctual gratification. Of the relationship between the two sexes — which for him cannot be a true love — he would be far from requiring such a restriction. Normal sexual intercourse he even allows, although carefully regulated by law, and for the purpose of repopulating his ideal state. "Platonic love" is — if Plato is not to be grossly misunderstood — really only love of youth.<sup>3</sup>

## 6. PEDERASTY IN GREECE

(a) *Dorian culture.* Plato was impelled to sublimate his Eros primarily because it was in conflict with the moral and legal views of the Athenian society of his time. The belief which occasionally crops up that pederasty was a quite widespread practice in the world of antiquity and hence was not morally repudiated as it was in the Christian culture, is entirely incorrect. Only for the so-called Dorian State can it be proven that homosexual practices, love relationships between elderly men and youths were openly acknowledged. And even there pederasty was a social phenomenon restricted to the relatively few, to the elite of nobles. It is reported to us as a knightly use or abuse,

<sup>1</sup> Republic (403 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (403 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lagerborg *op. cit.*, *passim*.

arisen probably from the military function of this class, out of their constant expeditions in the field and the prolonged camp life that kept men too long away from women and induced them to mutual satisfaction of the sexual needs. But even in Dorian circles, in spite of its frank acknowledgment or even religious sponsorship, pederasty was in no way an unmolested institution. To Lycurgus himself was traced back a law which punished sexual love of boys with death and ostracism.<sup>1</sup> And it is related of the Spartan king Agesilaus, whose feelings and behaviour, as Theodor Gomperz observes, "may be taken as typical of the best society of his country,"<sup>2</sup> that he had passionately protected himself against the very vivid sexual inclinations he felt in himself. Xenophon<sup>3</sup> reports of him:

"His habitual control of his affections surely deserves a tribute of admiration . . . he loved Megabates, the handsome son of Spithridates, with all the intensity of an ardent nature. Now it is the custom among the Persians to bestow a kiss on those whom they honour. Yet when Megabates attempted to kiss him, Agesilaus resisted his advances with all his might—an act of punctilious moderation surely! Megabates, feeling himself slighted, tried no more to kiss him, and Agesilaus approached one of his companions with a request that he would persuade Megabates to show him honour once again. 'Will you kiss him,' asked his companion, 'if Megabates yields?' After a deep silence, Agesilaus gave his reply: 'By the twin gods, no, not if I were straightway to be the fairest and strongest and fleetest man on earth! By all the gods I swear that I

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John Addington Symonds: *Die Homosexualitaet in Griechenland*, in Havelock Ellis and J. A. Symonds: *Das kontraere Geschlechtsgefuehl* (Bibliothek fuer Sozialwissenschaft, herausgegeben von Hans Kurella, 7. Bd., 1896), p. 54, and John Addington Symonds: *A Problem in Greek Ethics, being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion*, London 1901, p. 14. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (translated by E. C. Marchant. The Loeb Classical Library.) II, 12-13: "I think I ought to say something also about intimacy with boys, since this matter also has a bearing on education. In other Greek states, for instance among the Boeotians, man and boy live together, like married people; elsewhere, among the Eleians, for example, consent is won by means of favors. Some, on the other hand, entirely forbid suitors to talk with boys. — The customs instituted by Lycurgus were opposed to all of these. If someone, being himself an honest man, admired a boy's soul and tried to make of him an ideal friend without reproach and to associate with him, he approved, and believed in the excellence of this kind of training. But if it was clear that the attraction lay in the boy's outward beauty, he banned the connexion as an abomination; and thus he purged the relationship of all impurity, so that in Lacedaemon it resembled parental and brotherly love."

<sup>2</sup> Theodor Gomperz: *Greek Thinkers*, 1905, vol. II, p. 381. Gomperz takes the above mentioned case of Agesilaus as evidence for the "opposing forces" by means of which Greek love was "often restrained and held in check."

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Agesilaus*, V, 4-5.

would rather fight that same battle over again than that everything I see should turn into gold.'"

From this, the least that can be inferred is that the social attitude to pederasty was ambivalent in Sparta, too. We are reduced to mere conjecture as to the reasons which could permit the lawgivers to take an indulgent or even affirmative attitude to certain homosexual customs. An all too strong augmentation of the aristocratic class, organized in relation to a restricted ownership of land, was not in the political interest of the state. Overpopulation, moreover, formed a constant source of danger for the small Grecian states<sup>1</sup> and measures against it were no rarity. From this point of view we must judge the well known Spartan custom of exposing weak or crippled children.

Aristotle directly expresses the view that in Crete pederasty was introduced in order to deal with overpopulation.<sup>2</sup>

(b) *The relations of religion and art to pederasty.* Aside from the Dorian culture, in the Ionian and Athenian cultures in particular, there was certainly no persistent pederasty. Greek religion<sup>3</sup> with Zeus and his all too heterosexual habits and its Aphrodite who incorporated the love of man for woman, was a true apotheosis of normal sexual instincts. The marriage of Zeus to Hera stands in the center of Olympian life.<sup>4</sup> Marrying and having children were considered sacred institutions with the Greeks, and most essential patriotic duties. For the average attitude to love of youth nothing is more revealing than the myth which traces pederasty back to Laios, the father of Œdipus. Laios wanted to seduce the beautiful youth Chrysippos. The myth interprets the curse which lay on the house of the Labdadae as the revenge of Hera, protectress of marriage, and conse-

<sup>1</sup> Gomperz *op cit.*, vol. III, p. 117: "For the small and narrowly circumscribed republics of Greece, impoverishment through over-population, with resulting political disorders, was a danger of no small magnitude, and therefore at an early date engaged the serious attention even of practical legislators, such as Pheido the Corinthian. The danger was aggravated for the ruling class by the circumstance that its income was exclusively derived from the possession of land incapable of increase."

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1272a, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, pp. 118 sq., and Symonds, *A Problem*, pp. 65 sq.

<sup>4</sup> The myth of Ganymede may well have experienced a homosexual interpretation only relatively late under the influence of Dorian customs. Such reinterpretations must also have conformed to certain historical friendships such as that between Achilles and Patroclus. Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 381, 43, and Symonds, *A Problem*, pp. 1 sq., 5 sq.

quently as punishment for an act obviously held to be an unnatural vice.<sup>1</sup> In the Homeric poems there is no trace of this. The marriage of Hector with Andromache and of Odysseus with Penelope here shine forth as an undisputed ideal; the love of Menelaus for Helen sets in motion the whole train of heroic events.<sup>2</sup> And in the great tragedies also — at least in those preserved for us — nothing of a special esteem for pederasty is to be observed. The dramas in which Aeschylus and Sophocles should have dealt with the problem (as Aeschylus in "The Myrmidons") have not come down to us; we do not know, therefore how it was taken.<sup>3</sup> Sophocles might personally have been inclined towards love of boys. But Euripides — also on this point in agreement with the Sophists — expressly condemns pederasty.<sup>4</sup> In his "Chrysippus" of which only a fragment remains to us, he reports the above-mentioned Laios myth. He is alleged to have done this only to condemn the vice. A fragment preserved from the drama "Diktys" runs:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 42, and Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 5; further: W. Kroll: *Freundschaft und Knabenliebe* (Tusculum-Schriften, IV. Heft), Munchen 1927, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen*, 1882, vol. II, pp. 132 sqq. Schmidt says, p. 175: "The Greek people has always regarded marriage as an institution of great sanctity and the relationship between man and wife as natural and very intimate."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 69 sq., Symonds, *A Problem*, pp. 27 sq. and Kroll *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, XIII, 603-604 (Translated by C. B. Gulick, The Loeb Classical Library, Athenaeus VI, pp. 253 sqq.): "Sophocles was fond of young lads, as Euripides was fond of women. The poet Ion . . . writes as follows: 'I met Sophocles the poet of Chios when he was sailing as general to Lesbos.' And then Ion relates how Sophocles enticed to himself by a playful artifice a boy who had just given him to drink and stole a kiss from him. The passage taken from Ion ends with the following words: 'Many things of this sort he (Sophocles) was wont to say and do cleverly when he drank or when he did anything. In civic matters, however, he was neither wise nor efficient, but like any other individual among the better class of Athenians.'"

After this Athenaeus writes: "Hieronymus of Rhodes says in his *Historical Notes* that Sophocles lured a handsome boy outside the city wall to consort with him. Now the boy spread his own cloak on the grass, while they wrapped themselves in Sophocles' cape. When the meeting was over the boy seized Sophocles' cape and made off with it, leaving behind for Sophocles his boyish cloak. Naturally the incident was much talked of; when Euripides learned of the occurrence he jeered, saying that he himself had once consorted with this boy without paying any bonus, whereas Sophocles had been treated with contempt for his licentiousness. When Sophocles heard that, he addressed to him the following epigram, which refers to the fable of the Sun and the North Wind, and also alludes lightly to Euripides' practice of adultery: 'Helios it was, and not a boy, Euripides, who by his heat stripped me of my cape; but with you, when you were embracing another man's wife, Boreas consorted. So you are not so clever, because when sowing in another's field, you bring Eros into court for thieving.'"

"He was my friend; and never may love lead me to folly, nor to Kupris. Indeed, there is, in truth, another kind of love, love for the soul, righteous, temperate and good. Surely men ought to have made this law, that only the temperate and chaste should love, and send Kupris, daughter of Zeus, a-begging."<sup>1</sup>

That leaves no doubt as to the views of the poet. Also to be considered is that the repeatedly described friendly relations between Orestes and Pylades show no trace of a homosexual coloring.<sup>2</sup>

Especially obvious seems to be the attitude of rejection of the Athenians towards pederasty, in the realistic comedies, in particular those of Aristophanes. His attitude to this question is particularly symptomatic for Athens, because his poetry enables us to take into account the robust tastes of the great mass of average citizens as well as the ethico-political views of the reactionary aristocracy. And Aristophanes never tires of venting his scorn of the homosexual impulses of certain circles and also never drops his serious tone which clearly shows how great a danger he considered the publicity connected with such a perversion of the sexual life. So in the "Clouds" the homosexual Eros is scourged by the "Dikaioi Logos" as immoral and called the greatest damage the young men can experience.<sup>3</sup> In the "Birds" also, Aristophanes brands the love of boys as a vice, and reveals the danger by which, according to widespread popular belief, the youths are threatened. Just the comedies, however, show how prevalent pederasty must have been in certain circles. Smuggled in from the Dorian culture, it still encountered a violent opposition in Athens already in the fifth century,<sup>4</sup> an opposition supported primarily by the Sophists so passionately fought by Plato.

(c) *The attitude of the philosophers, in particular that of Xenophon.* Especially characteristic of the attitude of this philosophy is a comment in the writings of Prodicus which takes as its topic the well-known theme "Heracles at the Cross-Roads." There, Virtue says of Vice:

"What good thing is thine, poor wretch, or what pleasant thing

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 72. Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Aristophanes, *Clouds* 975, 1085-86.

<sup>4</sup> Bethe *op. cit.*, p. 446; Kroll *op. cit.*, p. 27.



dost thou know, if thou wilt do nought to win them? Thou dost not even tarry for the desire of pleasant things, but fillest thyself with all things before thou desirest them, eating before thou art hungry, drinking before thou art thirsty, . . . Thou dost rouse lust by many a trick, when there is no need, using men as women: thus thou trainest thy friends, waxing wanton by night, consuming in sleep the best hours of day."<sup>1</sup>

Virtue could only speak thus if pederasty was quite generally held to be vicious. It seems that one of Plato's most fiery opponents belonging to the Socratic school, Antisthenes, spoke against boy-love.<sup>2</sup> Among the Socratic circle, Xenophon more than any other — and obviously in spite of a friendly attitude to the Spartans — turned decisively against pederasty. Because of the uncertainty attending its composition one may doubt that his "Symposium" was a direct reply to Plato's like-named dialogue, although this is more than probable,<sup>3</sup> but it certainly may not be disputed that Xenophon's "Symposium" has the unmistakable tendency to decry boy-love and to honor marital sexual love. Of the many places clearly showing this only a few will be referred to. So in one place it runs: that from sexual love of a man for a boy the latter gets "only what excites the deepest contempt," and this of every variety of love, not only of that purchased. And when one has gained a youth through entreaty

"that is all the stronger reason for detestation."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon; *Memorabilia* II, 1, 29-31.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, VI, 11: "Favorite themes with him were the following . . . that the wise man . . . will marry in order to have children from union with the handsomest women . . ." Cf. Ivo Bruns, *Attische Liebestheorien usw. Neue Jahrbuecher fuer das klassische Altertum*, V. Bd., 1900, p. 29; Kroll *op. cit.*, p. 28. Further Kroll in the article "Knabenliebe" in *Pauly-Wissowa, Realenzyklopaedie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 21. Bd., 897 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> The same interpretation is also given by Bruns in particular, *op. cit.*, p. 26-30. He believes that the "Symposium" of Xenophon is decidedly a polemic against Plato's "Symposium." "While Plato gives sensual pederasty a limited support" — in the "Phaedrus" — "Xenophon quite plainly condemns it." Cf. also G. F. Rettig, *Knabenliebe und Frauenliebe in Platons Symposion*. *Philologos*, XLI. Bd., 1882, p. 429, and H. Graef, *Ist Platons oder Xenophons Symposion das fruehere?* 1898, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Banquet*, VIII, 19. (The Loeb Classical Library.) Cf. also IV, 52; VIII, 10/11; VIII, 31, 32. Steinhart in his introduction to his translation of the Platonic Symposium says of that of Xenophon: it has an obvious polemic relation to Plato's Symposium, and his intention is no other "than the struggle against love of youth" (*Platons saemtl. Werke, uebersetzt von Hieronymus Mueller, mit Einl., begl. von Steinhart*, IV. Bd., 1854, p. 268). Steinhart shares the view of K. F. Hermann, that Xenophon had written his "Banquet" knowing that of Plato (*op. cit.*, p. 267).

Xenophon's views, which probably reflect those of the average person of Athens, are very clearly indicated in the following citation:

"For a youth does not share in the pleasure of the intercourse as a woman does, but looks on, sober, at another in love's intoxication. Consequently, it need not excite any surprise if contempt for the lover is engendered in him. If one looked into the matter, also, he would descry no ill effect when people are loved for their personality, but that many shocking results have come from companionship lost to shame."<sup>1</sup>

Especially characteristic is the conclusion of the dialogue. The Syracusan and his performers had prepared at Socrates' suggestion to give the spectators

"the greatest possible amount of pleasure in watching them."<sup>2</sup>

It was a pantomime of Ariadne and Dionysus. After the spectacle of love making performed by the two players,

"those who were unwedded," so it runs in Xenophon, "swore that they would take to themselves wives, and those who were already married mounted horse and rode off to their wives that they might enjoy them."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the post-Platonic philosophy was completely against pederasty<sup>4</sup> and held it to be an unnatural vice. Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, who had lived with him while engaged in common work, speaks in the "Nicomachean Ethics"<sup>5</sup> of pederasty in connection with certain pathological dispositions.

"I mean the brutish states, as in the case of the female who, they say, rips open pregnant women and devours the infants, or of the things in which some of the tribes about the Black Sea that have gone savage are said to delight — in raw meat or human flesh, or in lending their children to one another to feast upon — or of the story told of Phalaris. These states are brutish, but others arise as a result of disease (or, in some cases, of madness, as with the man who sacrificed and ate his mother, or with the slave who ate the liver of his fellow), and others are morbid states resulting from custom, e.g. the habit of plucking out the hair or of gnawing the nails, or even coals or earth, and in addition to these pederasty; for these

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, Banquet VIII, 21/22.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, Banquet VII, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon *op. cit.*, IX, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kroll *op. cit.*, p. 28; Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 106; Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 5 (1148b) (W. D. Ross).



arise in some by nature and in others, as in those who have been the victim of lust from childhood, from habit."

(d) *The antipederastic tendency of penal legislation and morality.* The Athenian penal code contained provisions the antipederastic tendency of which is obvious. In Aeschines' "Speech against Timarchus"<sup>1</sup> we read:

"Consider, fellow citizens, how much attention that ancient law giver, Solon, gave to morality, as did Draco and the other lawgivers of those days. First, you recall, they laid down laws to protect the morals of our children, and they expressly prescribed what were to be the habits of the freeborn boy, and how he was to be brought up; then they legislated for the lads and next for the other age-groups in succession, including in their provision, not only private citizens, but also the public man. And when they had inscribed these laws, they gave them to you in trust, and made you their guardians."

Then he quotes the following law:

"The teachers of the boys shall open the school-rooms not earlier than sunrise, and they shall close them before sunset.<sup>2</sup> No person who is older than the boys shall be permitted to enter the room while they are there, unless he be a son of the teacher, a brother, or a daughter's husband. If anyone enter in violation of this prohibition, he shall be punished with death. The superintendents of the gymnasias shall under no conditions allow any one who has reached the age of manhood to enter the contests of Hermes together with the boys. A gymnasiarch who does permit this and fails to keep such a person out of the gymnasium, shall be liable to the penalties prescribed for the seduction of free-born youth. Every choregus who is appointed by the people shall be more than forty years of age."<sup>3</sup>

Then Aeschines continues:

"Now after this, fellow citizens, he lays down laws regarding crimes which, great as they undoubtedly are, do actually occur, I believe, in the city. For the very fact that certain unbecoming things were being done was the reason for the inactment of these laws by the men of old. At any rate the law says explicitly: if any boy is let out for hire as a prostitute, whether it be by father or brother or uncle or guardian, or by any one else who has control of him,

<sup>1</sup> Aeschines: Speech against Timarchus (translated by Charles D. Adams, The Loeb Classical Library) 9-21. Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 82; Symonds, *A Problem*, pp. 37, 41; Hans Licht: *Sittengeschichte Griechenlands*, 1926, II, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Aeschines' explanation: the legislator is exceeding suspicious of the teachers being alone with a boy, or in the dark with him.

<sup>3</sup> Aeschines' explanation: in order that the choregus may have reached the most temperate time of life before he comes into contact with the children.

prosecution is not to lie against the boy himself, but against the man who let him out for hire and the man who hired him; against the one because he let him out for hire, and against the other, it says, because he hired him. And the law has made the penalties for both offenders the same. Moreover the law frees a son when he has become a man, from all obligations to support or to furnish a home to a father by whom he has been hired out for prostitution."

Later Aeschines quotes the following laws:

"If any Athenian shall outrage a free-born child, the parent or guardian of the child shall prosecute him before the Thesmothetae, and shall demand a specific penalty. If the court condemns the accused to death, he shall be delivered to the constables and be put to death the same day. If he be condemned to pay a fine, and be unable to pay the fine immediately, he must pay within eleven days after the trial, and he shall remain in prison until payment is made. The same action shall hold against those who abuse the persons of slaves."

"If any Athenian shall have prostituted his person, he shall not be permitted to become one of the nine archons, nor to discharge the office of priest, nor to act as an advocate for the state, nor shall he hold any office whatsoever, at home or abroad, whether filled by lot or by election; he shall not be sent as a herald; he shall not take part in debate, nor be present at the public sacrifices; when the citizens are wearing garlands, he shall wear none; and he shall not enter within the limits of the place that has been purified for the assembling of the people. If any man who has been convicted of prostitution act contrary to these prohibitions, he shall be put to death."<sup>1</sup>

Yet while only commercial and professional pederasty was subject to the penal code, every variety was held to be morally objectionable. But the moral attitude with respect to the actual extension of this form of love in the uppermost strata of society was not a uniform one. Clearly, there was an opposition of two different opinions. A typical symptom of this was the fashionable literary device of contrasting a noble spiritual and a vulgar sensual love for boys. The conflict within the published views is expressed in an anecdote handed down to us in Plutarch. It relates to the pairs of lovers forming the "sacred band of lovers" of Pelopidas. When Philipp of Macedon saw the 300 who had fallen at Chaironea, he is said to have shouted: "Perish any man who suspects that these men either did or suffered anything that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. H. Lipsius, *Das Attische Recht und Rechtsverfahren*, 1905-1919, p. 420 sqq., 436 sq.

was base."<sup>1</sup> The opinion that homosexual love was "base" must have been a very extensive one. Bruns remarks: "The pederastic problem irritated society. One has never quite ceased to consider this relationship as unnatural." He believes that "a strong family tradition has struggled with a more or less open advocacy of serious relationships of this sort."<sup>2</sup> There must always have been — even at the time of greatest flowering of boy-love — moralizers "who damned boy-love as an unnatural fornication." "In the non-Dorian states, in which alone this opposition arose and could gain foothold, boy-love was, in spite of frank advocacy, a vice . . ."<sup>3</sup> And Symonds remarks: "That perturbation of the emotions which is inseparable from any of the deeper forms of personal attachment, and which the necessary conditions of boy-love exasperated, was irksome to the Greeks. It is not a little curious to observe how all the poets of the despotic age" — who sang of boy-love — "resent and fret against the force of their own feeling, differing herein from the singers of chivalry, who idealized the very pains of passion." He refers to Theognis who describes his love for Kurnus as "bitter-sweet and subject to anxiety."<sup>4</sup>

(e) *Evidence from Plato's writings.* Above all, however, we can see in Plato's own writings how decisively pederasty was rejected by the best circles of Athens. In the "Symposium" it is to be read that fathers appoint tutors to their sons chiefly to prevent their talking

"with their lovers, and place them under a tutor's care, who is appointed to see to these things, and their companions and equals cast in their teeth anything of the sort which they may observe, and their elders refuse to silence the reprovers and do not rebuke them . . ."<sup>5</sup>

Also from the conversation which Pausanias carries on here in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kroll: Pauly-Wissowa, 21. Bd., p. 900; Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 61; Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Bruns *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Bethe *op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>4</sup> Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 24. He summarizes: We need not imagine, "because Greek literature abounds in references to pederastia, and because this passion played an important part in Greek history, that therefore the majority of the race were not susceptible in a far higher degree to female charms. On the contrary, our best authorities speak of boy-love as a characteristic which distinguished warriors, gymnasts, poets, and philosophers from the common multitude. As far as regards artists, the anecdotes which are preserved about them turn chiefly upon their preference for women." (p. 67.)

<sup>5</sup> Symposium (183 St.)

praise of love, one can notice the unfavorable attitude of society to boy-love. Clearly to place his Eros beyond the reach of criticism, Plato hastens to draw a sharp distinction between true pederasty and the love of boys still in their childhood. The real pederasts

"love not boys, but intelligent beings whose reason is beginning to be developed, much about the time at which their beards begin to grow."

Indeed he proposes a law which forbids love of children. The lover of children:

"These are the persons who bring a reproach on love; and some have been led to deny the lawfulness of such attachments because they see the impropriety and evil of them."<sup>1</sup>

Of "reproach," "impropriety" and "evil" there must also have been much talk in general in connection with pederasty.<sup>2</sup> And the dialogue "Phaedrus" teaches us that the lover sees in the relatives and friends of his beloved only

"hinderers or reprovers of their most sweet converse."<sup>3</sup>

and that, when the lover in his frenzy wishes to be as submissive and near as possible to the object of his desires

"the rules and proprieties of life, on which he formerly prided himself, he now despises."<sup>4</sup>

These facts, attested by the boy-loving Plato himself, satisfactorily demonstrate that in Athens the homosexual Eros, irrespective of its extension into distinguished circles, indeed perhaps on this very account, was viewed as a grave danger for the youth and therefore as injurious to the state and in consequence must have been met with a moral condemnation.

And this can not have been otherwise in a society which has not yet entirely disintegrated inwardly, which has not yet quite surrendered. The primitive self-preservative impulse of society must defend itself against a form of love which, generally speaking, leads with the denial of propagation to social death, to the dying out of the group. Out of this instinct and especially there where it appears in a still viable people will homosexuality be

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (181/182 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. as to this Rettig *op. cit.*, p. 423. "A stain must remain in every case therefore, even, according to Pausanias, from this kind of love . . ."

<sup>3</sup> Phaedrus (240 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Phaedrus (252 St.)

perceived as against nature and will be stigmatized, therefore, as vicious.

"Whether such matters are to be regarded jestingly or seriously, I think that the pleasure is to be deemed natural which arises out of the intercourse between men and women; but that the intercourse of men with men, or of women with women, is contrary to nature, and that the bold attempt was originally due to unbridled lust."

"But how can we take precautions against the unnatural loves of either sex, from which innumerable evils have come upon individuals and cities? How shall we devise a remedy and way of escape out of so great a danger? . . . For if any one following nature should lay down the law which existed before the days of Laius, and denounce these lusts as contrary to nature, adducing the animals as a proof that such unions were monstrous, he might prove his point, but he would be wholly at variance with the custom of your states."

For he who gave himself to boy-love,

"... intentionally destroys the seeds of human increase, or sows them in stony places, in which they will take no root . . ."

It was an Athenian writer who is here cited, to testify that in the Athens of Plato homosexuality was detected as a danger to the state. It is from Plato himself, from his "Laws," that these important objections to pederasty sprang.<sup>1</sup> But it is the old Plato who speaks in this way, the old man whose Eros has already died and in whose memory Eros continues to live only as the source of "innumerable evils." From this point can be traced how the youth, how the man has suffered from it, how much this genius, entirely directed at state and society, takes account of the anti-social in his sexual constitution; how he, with his political position against the moral deterioration and for the restoration of the old ancestral customs, must have considered it a fault that he felt himself unable to serve the fatherland by the establishment of a family and of successors, and how severe the struggle was against his innermost nature when he heroically put upon himself the renunciation of instinctual gratification as a moral ideal.

<sup>1</sup> Laws (636 St.), (836 St.), (839 St.). Cf. also (841 St.) where Plato says of the laws regulating sexual intercourse that at least pederasty has to be abolished altogether. The inconsistency existing between the treatment of Eros in the "Laws" and in the "Symposium" and "Phaedrus" has often been commented on. Cf. Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 96; Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 48. But up to now no satisfactory psychological explanation has been found. W. Fite *op. cit.*, p. 170 says of Plato's attitude towards pederasty in the "Laws": "Plato, we might say, has had his eyes opened."

## 7. PLATO'S CONFLICT WITH SOCIETY

THIS sexual constitution of Plato serves not only to make him different from the great mass of normal individuals, but equally makes him take a different position within the circle given to praise of boy-love. Throughout, the impression is given that most of these men, who had felt themselves drawn to beautiful boys, were also capable of love for the other sex. Presumably they were only homosexual during a certain period of their life, as youths who had more contact with boys than with women and in whom the youthful eros was still lively. But having arrived at manhood they took women and bred children and looked back upon the boy loving eros as upon a youthful prank. Most of the men, of whom we have reports, that they were not inaccessible to masculine beauty — like Solon, Aeschylus, Sophocles, etc. — were married and had descendants; in particular was this the case with Plato's master and prototype Socrates<sup>1</sup> and his paramour Alcibiades, as well as Dion with whom Plato was passionately in love. The usual phenomena of pederasty clearly rest on a bisexual makeup, and hence are not properly an inversion but a redoubling, a broader development of the sexual impulse. It expresses itself symptomatically in the favorite motifs of pictorial art, in the Amazon and the Hermaphrodite.<sup>2</sup> Very significant, for example, is the fact that Xenophon in his "Symposium" represents Critobulos as a young husband and at the same time as in love with Kleinias.<sup>3</sup> Xenophon does not hesitate to picture this boy-loving man at the close of the dialogue stirred up by the love games displayed there as hastening to the marital bed. Typical also is Aristotle's report of a dispute between two aristocrats in Syracuse which should have led to an overthrow of the constitution:

<sup>1</sup> H. Gomperz, *Psychologische Beobachtungen an griechischen Philosophen*. Imago, X. Bd., 1924, p. 40 sq.: "Evil tongues of the succeeding centuries even asserted that in his relations with the feminine sex Socrates showed rather too little than too much self-mastery. Aside from his wife he had relations with public women." And p. 62: "As far as that goes Socrates was without a doubt receptive to the stimuli from both sexes, and this double sensibility was surely the rule in that circle in which his life was passed, i.e. in the upper circles of Athens of the second half of the fifth century."

<sup>2</sup> As Lagerborg *op. cit.*, p. 46 makes clear.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Symonds, *Homosexualitaet* p. 85; Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 40.



"The one had seduced the lover of the other in his absence, whereupon the latter had seduced the wife of the first."<sup>1</sup>

Such bisexuality is, from the social standpoint, much less dangerous and would therefore not at all be perceived subjectively as an inferiority;<sup>2</sup> for it does not drive one away from society; on the contrary it permits one to be bound with double ties to the society to which one owes the duty of propagation. It seems that Plato was not endowed with this happier form of Eros, that he, who had never thought of founding a family, had experienced the tragic destiny of a one-sided homosexuality; and that just for this reason he necessarily entered into a deep and painful conflict with himself, with the world and in particular with society. Yet more than the joyful shouts of the Eros which espouses itself, is stressed the torture of the pathologically cursed Eros of the "Phaedrus," that great song that Plato wrote to describe boy-love. This latter Eros is ashamed and condemns itself. But how he may have hated this Eros as the Tyrant of his soul is betrayed by the passionate abhorrence with which he paints the picture of the tyrannical character in the IXth book of the "Republic." The deepest secret of this type of character he confesses to be the Eros, just that Eros which in the "Symposium" he praises above all. In that way the youth is spoiled, since in such a bad society there is implanted

"in him a master passion (Eros), to be lord over his idle and spend-thrift lusts — a sort of monstrous winged drone."

Thus he is changed into a Tyrant, so that his

"soul has Madness for the captain of his guard"

which Plato in his "Phaedrus" calls a "godlike" madness.

<sup>1</sup> Politics (1303b).

<sup>2</sup> The sexual inclination of a man for man is, of course, very often, but surely not always the symptom of a feminine character. We may suppose that anyone who feels himself drawn to men and repelled by women has himself a feminine predisposition. And this feminine predisposition of a man was held by orthodox Greek morality to be an inferiority, it was characterized as "disease of effeminacy (*θηλεία νόσος*)," and "described by Herodotus and Hippocrates as something essentially foreign and non-Hellenic" (Symonds, *Die Homosexualitaet*, p. 59; Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 28). But a straightforward bisexual disposition is reconcilable with a masculine character. Here it is the girlishness in the boy's beauty that attracts. That the masculine and feminine principle can appear in different proportions in concrete individuals, that there are in consequence masculine women and feminine men is a fact — as H. Gomperz *op. cit.*, p. 26 has pointed out — already known to Parmenides.

"Is not this the reason why Eros has been called a Tyrant of old?" asks Socrates here when condemning the Tyrant, in whose innermost being Eros is enthroned:

"Eros is his tyrant, and lives lordly in him and lawlessly, and being himself a king";

Is that still the same Eros whom he celebrates in the "Symposium" as king, indeed as "king of the Gods?"<sup>1</sup> How differently from here and in the "Phaedrus" Plato must also view his Eros when he brands this Eros, simply Eros, as that which seduces youth into tyranny.

"Meanwhile the old opinions which he had when a child, and which gave judgment about good and evil, are overthrown by those others which have just been emancipated, and are now the body-guard of Eros and share his empire. These in his democratic days, when he was still subject to the laws and to his father, were only let loose in the dreams of sleep. But now that he is under the dominion of Eros, he becomes always and in waking reality what he was then very rarely and in a dream only; he will commit the foulest murder, or eat forbidden food, or be guilty of another horrid act. Eros is his tyrant, and lives lordly in him and lawlessly, and being himself a king, leads him on, as a tyrant leads a State, to the performance of any reckless deed by which he can maintain himself and the rabble of his associates, whether those whom evil communications have brought in from without, or those whom he himself has allowed to break loose within him by reason of a similar evil nature in himself."

That is the evil, in part forced on one from without by a bad associate, in part already springing up within, from the unchained frightful impulses; those are the "raging beasts" which will not suffer any restrictions, "inaccessible like any animal to every claim of reason," of which Plato speaks in the "Timaeus"; that is the Eros against which Plato is not able to defend his soul except by the rigorous ideal of chastity.

#### 8. PLATO'S IDEAL OF CHASTITY: SOCRATES

THIS is what tied him to Socrates. Even in this daemonic man Plato saw his Eros as very much alive, saw him constantly to be after the youths, attracting them by the brilliant gifts of his rare spirit. But he, who like no other understood the dangerous

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (195 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (571-575 St.)

game of love, who in spite of his ugliness was able like no other to gain the love of the most beautiful youth, he returned calm and serene and never conquered by earthly love, always victorious from all his love adventures. In the "Symposium" Plato has erected a memorial for all time to the chastity of Socrates and to chastity in general. Befuddled by wine, Alcibiades has betrayed the secrets of the remarkable man; how he, Alcibiades, first caught by Socrates' mind, yet was shaken and overcome, how his heart beat more rapidly at Socrates' talk than that of a Corybantic reveller and how he was moved to tears, how he was seized with love for him who had given himself as lover and humbly wooed him, and how nevertheless all attempts at seduction by the youth were in vain. Yet he was successful in getting Socrates to sleep alone with him in his house, he had indeed been lying under the same blanket with Socrates and had put his arm around him all night, but, by the gods and goddesses,

"nothing more happened, but in the morning when I awoke . . . I arose as from the couch of a father or an elder brother."<sup>1</sup>

Such chastity may have been easier to the cooler Socrates who, besides, at home had a wife and children, than to the more passionate Plato who remained single all his life. It could well be that Socrates, too, was of an erotic nature and his rationalism only a mask behind which to hide his passion; but love was not so strong in him that it could have put up a serious dispute with reason. When the Syrian physiognomist Zopyros inferred, from the visage of Socrates, his sensuality, the latter — in spite of the weighty protest of his disciples — is said to have explained: "Zopyros has seen correctly; but I am the master of these passions."<sup>2</sup> Plato, following his master, was also obliged to call on

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (215 St., 219 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Gomperz *op. cit.*, p. 57, where it is stressed that with Socrates there stood in the focus of his life and thought the "concept of self-mastery," and "that the real goal of this Socratic self-education was the overcoming of the longing for the bodily possession of beautiful youths." (p. 63). Socrates was no ascetic in general, he indulged in eating and drinking and in particular in sexual intercourse with women. The only self-denial to which he permitted no exception was the sexual love of boys (p. 65). As the motive for this renunciation and the sublimation of love, Gomperz conjectures: "Socrates was not born to the circle in which he lived. And the Athenian bourgeoisie from which he sprang — we see this from the Comedies — had always remained hostile to boy-love: the "good society" of Attica had taken over its homosexual inclinations from the Dorians. Could it not then have been the spirit of his ancestry, the surroundings in which

reason in the struggle against Eros; but on the path to virtue it provided him with no sufficient support. Therefore beyond all Socratic rationalism Plato was forced to seek for salvation in mysticism; only through this could he hope to find the last step to the view of the longed for Eternal Good. And although Plato in the decisive phase of his life and in his thinking passed far beyond the Socratic method of critical analysis, yet to the end of his life he remained fixed to the personality of the master in his dialogues; he had, of course, transformed it from the old ugly to a "younger and more beautiful Socrates,"<sup>1</sup> but he remained true to the prototype of his youthful days, in whom he honored, while Eros reigned in him, the ideal of chastity which he never fully attained.

In the talks with which Socrates, in an atmosphere impregnated with eroticism, fascinated the aristocratic youth of Athens whose minds thirsted for spiritual culture, the topic was virtue and, above all, justice. Neither natural science nor sociology were objects for the speculative theorizing of this catcher of souls, since more than on anything else, he laid stress on the ethical justification of the individual life.<sup>2</sup> After the severe shake-up of the moral consciousness by the relativism of natural science

he grew up, which gave him the strength and the will to overcome the desire for the bodily possession of beautiful boys? And when he remarked to Critias that the desire for commerce with boys had something swinish in it, do we not perhaps hear in these words the echo of that condemnation Socrates had been accustomed to hear since his childhood from the small bourgeoisie of Athens? (p. 67). That may have played a part, of course; but it does not suffice to explain why Plato, the aristocrat, chose so passionately to follow his master just in this point. Pederasty was rejected not only by the small bourgeoisie and in the comedies; the whole Sophist movement and with this the tragedies of Euripides show the same tendency. H. Gomperz denies what seems manifestly the case: that there was something like an "indignant public opinion" against pederasty, and in the circles in which Socrates and the greater part of his youthful admirers lived. The "unrefined or only slightly spiritualized love of youth" could not have been so generally accepted as Gomperz assumes; and this even on the grounds that he himself cites. The first: this boy-love had seemed vicious to the majority of the people, a conception which could not possibly have remained without reverberations in the upper classes of a democracy; and secondly, because it came from the Dorians to which the official and, in particular, the "good" society of Athens were completely hostile.

<sup>1</sup> Epistle II (314)

<sup>2</sup> H. Gomperz writes, *op. cit.*, p. 68/9: "If then very violent moral conflicts occurred in Socrates' soul, could not the very predominance of moral questions in his thinking have been based on them? . . . Our endeavors for a psychological understanding would in any case be more satisfactory if we dared to assume that Socrates had demanded of himself the question: What is the good, the decent, the right? not out of simple eagerness for theoretical knowledge, but originally much more because he did not himself really know what was, for him, good, decent and right, in other words, how he himself should behave and conduct his life . . .

and the sophistic social doctrines, Socrates sought, as the first great representative of the religious and political reaction, for a firm basis for ethical values; and he believed he had found it in human intellect. Virtue for him consisted in cognizance, which determines human conduct by knowable concepts, and these concepts were concepts of the virtuous or of virtue, value judgments, ethical norms for society. The rationale of his speculative method with concepts, which just because it was rationalistic could give only a critique of moral principles and never a positive morality, was throughout sophist notwithstanding that his goal, absolute value, was as thoroughly anti-sophist. It was for the sake of that goal that Plato became his disciple. The passionate determination with which Socrates again and again re-examined the topic of justice must have greatly attracted the young Plato in his ardent search for justification of himself and the world, although the futility of the Socratic endeavors, the impossibility of arriving at a satisfactory definition of justice by way of rational understanding, could not have remained hidden from him. This is shown in his first dialogues, in which he so fondly delineates the figure of the Master, and which end so resultless. But perhaps Socrates himself was not very anxious to arrive at any definite conclusions, as he was not anxious either in the game of love to pluck the ripe fruit; perhaps something quite different was the goal of his preoccupation with the young. What the young Plato longed to hear from the many, occasionally quite odd, talks of his teacher was not so much the answer to the question of what essentially constituted the good and the right, but rather the affirmation that the good and the right existed, that there was something like a moral value to the life of the individual, and that there really was a justice for society. And it was just this that Socrates was never too tired to assert and which, better than by his logical argumentations, he proved by his very life. If then Socrates had arrived at no satisfactory definitions of virtue, no definition of justice, in his personality itself could Plato see the realization of virtue, the living justice.

So it would not seem improbable that for Socrates the question as to the True and the Good originally referred to a quite vital personal problem." Gomperz directly asserts that with Socrates there may have existed a connection between his theoretical attitude to ethical problems, and his pederastic inclinations. (*op. cit.*, p. 70).



Therefore, the death of Socrates must have been for Plato the most shattering experience of his life. With exquisite intuition the Russian mystic Solovyev<sup>1</sup> has seen that Socrates was, to Plato, more than a teacher, that he was the second spiritual and moral father to the fatherless youngster. In the difficult conflict which Plato had to carry on with his own nature, Socrates was his greatest support. If he felt himself, through his own predisposition, to be placed in a hostile opposition to the democratic society in which only the many, and the much too many, according to the vile principle of equality take too much room; if he felt himself driven into a flight from this world in which there was very little hope for the victory of the good, then the execution of Socrates threatened to disrupt the last tie. A society which condemned the only just one to death, a world in which the one and only chaste person must die, can only be the kingdom of evil. The death of Socrates "revealed to the eyes of his disciple the whole gulf of evil in the world."<sup>2</sup> That was the abyss which, from then on split Plato's thinking: that was the dualism which dominated his system and which under the impression of the shattering experience took on a deeply pessimistic character.

#### 9. THE PLATONIC PESSIMISM

It is this mood which speaks out of the dialogues "Gorgias" and "Phaedo." The true philosopher turns away from the State, from this State of a debased democracy. "A deep abyss lies between him and the State," so does Apelt characterize Plato's attitude in "Gorgias."<sup>3</sup> And in fact an abyss widens here between State and philosophy, more, between life and philosophy in general. The thought arises: if it is true, that those are the happiest who need nothing, then the happiest are the dead.

"But surely life according to your view is an awful thing."

The gloomy words of Euripides are cited: "Who knows if life be not death and death life?" And Plato's Socrates, supple-

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Solovyev: Plato. Translated from the Russian by Richard Gill. 1905, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Solovyev *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Platons Dialog Gorgias, uebersetzt und erlaeutert von Otto Apelt. 2. Aufl. Philos. Bibliothek, Bd. 148. Leipzig 1922. p. 8.



menting this, adds: "and that we are very likely dead."<sup>1</sup> The true life is not in this world. And for a realization of justice, hope must be deferred to the next world, to which the soul has to go after death, to find its reward and punishment. In the "Phaedo," however, we come across the doctrine that the body is only a tomb for the soul, from which the true philosopher has to fly as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup> The φιλόσοφος as lover of wisdom is sharply contrasted with the φιλοσώματος as lover of the body.<sup>3</sup> A deep longing for death is expressed in this dialogue which deals with the death of Socrates.

"For I deem that the true votary of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men; they do not perceive that he is always pursuing death and dying . . ."<sup>4</sup>

As in the "Gorgias," so here also the good man, mortifying the body, subordinating the senses and the sensual, the "philosopher" living only the life of reason, in fact the whole of "philosophy" stands in conscious opposition to life as an evil. The philosopher must, in order to follow his true calling, turn away from life and in particular from love.

"And the true philosophers, and they only, are ever seeking to release the soul. Is not the separation and release of the soul from the body their especial study?"<sup>5</sup>

For philosophy is directed at knowing the truth, at true existence, and this can be grasped only by pure thinking, never through sensory perception. Through the senses the soul is merely "led astray."<sup>6</sup> It is clear that perception through the eye is full of deception, not less than through the ear and other senses<sup>7</sup> and that one does not have to hold for true anything thus received.<sup>8</sup> Anything perceived through the senses means as much, however, as anything perceived through the body.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gorgias (492, 493 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Phaedo (82 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Phaedo (68 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Phaedo (64 St.)

<sup>5</sup> Phaedo (67 St.)

<sup>6</sup> Phaedo (65 St.)

<sup>7</sup> Phaedo (65 St.)

<sup>8</sup> Phaedo (83 St.)

<sup>9</sup> Phaedo (79 St.)

"Atropos, the goddess of death, seems to take us away when we try to grasp true existence through pure thinking."<sup>1</sup>

For, while the soul is infected with the evil of the body, our desire will not be satisfied.<sup>2</sup> What we desire above all is the knowledge of the good and the just, their absolute existence, which sensory perception cannot establish, and which consequently — since its existence is assumed as self-evident — can be the subject only of pure thinking freed from all connection with the body and the senses. When Plato ever again vigorously emphasizes that only the understanding but not the senses can grasp the truth, the true existence, he means primarily the existence of the good, the beautiful, the just. And among the "endless unrests" which our body produces in us and which hinder us in the "search after true being," i.e., which prevent our arriving at the good, "the loves and lusts" are especially singled out and emphasized, that "wars, and fightings, and factions" come "from the body and the lusts of the body."

"It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body — the soul in herself must behold things in themselves; and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; not while we live, but after death . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed in his deep pessimism in relation to this world, which corresponded to a highflown optimism as to the beyond, Plato almost attained to the standpoint of a full agnosticism; he went so far as to assert:

"Either knowledge is not to be attained at all, or if at all, after death. For then, and not till then, the soul will be parted from the body and exist in herself alone."<sup>4</sup>

In this world there is no true knowledge, just as there is no justice, since the former is directed only at the latter. An alternative is posed: agnosticism or transcendentalism, not only to objects but to the process of knowing itself. This knowing freed from all bodily sensibility already clearly reveals the tendency

<sup>1</sup> Phaedo (66 St.). This is the translation of Apelt, Platons Dialog Phaidon, philos. Bibl. Bd., 147, 2. Aufl., 1920. Apelt reads "Ἀτροπος, not ἀτραπός. Cf. his notes *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Phaedo (66 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Phaedo (66 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Phaedo (66 St.) p. 450.

to mysticism; it is a consequence of the pessimistic dualism which reaches its climax in the "Phaedo."

Here for the first time the fully unfolded doctrine of ideas is presented. The contrast between the eternally unalterable invisible idea and the constantly changing particular things perceptible to the senses is related to the contrast between the soul and body, which here represents the opposition of good and evil. The liberation of the soul from the body is called a "purification," a "freeing from evil."<sup>1</sup> The soul escapes after the death of the body "to a place like itself." And this place is described as a more "worthy," a "purer" one, it is the place "of the good and reasonable good."<sup>2</sup> It is said

"that the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and that the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintellectual, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable."<sup>3</sup>

The essence of the reasonable soul is thus the good. And since the body with its lusts is its opposite, the essence of the former can only — which nevertheless is not expressly said — be the evil. The body is a "corporeal" one and this is

"heavy and weighty and earthy, and is that element of sight by which a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world."<sup>4</sup>

Obviously the evil is here symbolized by weight. The invisible soul is akin to the invisible idea; the body, however, belongs to the visible things.<sup>5</sup> And the domain of the ideas must be the place to which the soul goes after death of the body, the domain of the good god. Even though this is not directly said, it arises indirectly out of the fact that in the "Phaedo" there is designated as the first Idea, the first "Ding an sich" (thing in itself), the first object of knowledge of what has "true existence": "absolute justice" and then "absolute beauty and absolute good."<sup>6</sup>

The good is, of course, not yet explained as it is in the "Republic": as the central idea. But philosophy, as the "search for

<sup>1</sup> Phaedo (66/67 St.; 82 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Phaedo (80 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Phaedo (80 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Phaedo (81 St.)

<sup>5</sup> Phaedo (79 St.)

<sup>6</sup> Phaedo (65 St.)

the real essence,"<sup>1</sup> as the knowledge of the true reality, is in the "Phaedo" also, from the first and foremost, knowledge of the just, good and beautiful. When Plato here speaks of the ideas as of absolute things, then it is almost exclusively of the just, the beautiful, and the good.<sup>2</sup> These are values. The contrast of ideas and things appears here chiefly as an opposition of value and reality; with the provision, of course, that to the value, i.e. the absolute value alone, is adjudicated the reality of true being, while to what is usually called reality, material things, true being is denied. And because the world of ideas in the "Phaedo" is a world of values, the world view at which Plato here aims is entirely normative, a knowledge of value which in last analysis can only be a knowledge of good and evil; and which he — in the polemic against Anaxagoras — expressly places in opposition to a scientific explanation of the world. And so, as the opposition between body and soul is made absolute in that the body is quite and entirely evil and the soul is quite and completely good, likewise the antagonism between idea and thing is considered to be absolute. They too are placed in absolute opposition, since only to the world of ideas, not to the world of objects, of material sensation, is adjudicated true being. The apparent reality which is opposed to the world of ideas, to the domain of the good god — it is not directly said but does arise indirectly from the opposition to the world of the good — this reality is evil and has therefore to be denied.

Here, too, the antisocial tendency of this pessimistic dualism comes very clearly to the fore: "The impure are not permitted to approach the pure."<sup>3</sup> The "real philosophers," those who "abstain from all fleshly lusts, and hold out against them and refuse to give themselves up to them" and consequently "approximate as closely as possible during their earthly life to a knowledge of the good and the right," those who renounce the

<sup>1</sup> Phaedo (66 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Phaedo (75 St.): "for we are not speaking only of equality, but of beauty, goodness, justice, holiness, and of all which we stamp with the name of essence in the dialectical process, both when we ask and when we answer questions." Further (76 St.): "if, as we are always repeating, there is an absolute beauty, and goodness, and an absolute essence of all things; . . ." Again (77 St.): "For there is nothing which to my mind is so patent as that beauty, goodness, and the other notions of which you were just now speaking, have a most real and absolute existence . . ." Cf. further (78 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Phaedo (67 St.)

"love of power and honor," who "do not merely live moulding and fashioning the body . . .," they

"will not walk in the ways of the blind; and when philosophy offers them purification and release from evil, they feel that they ought not to resist her influence, and whither she leads they turn and follow."<sup>1</sup>

It is the way of personal "purification and release," a way of individual salvation. The philosopher separates himself from the mass of the people and cares for his own soul.<sup>2</sup> So far is Plato here, in the "Phaedo," from the basic thoughts of his later work, the "Republic," where the philosopher not only seeks what is right for himself, but for all others, and attempts to realize it against their will and even to enforce it, where the philosopher, and only the philosopher, is called to rule the State.

#### 10. THE OPTIMISTIC TURN

BUT the pessimism in relation to this world, the tendency to make absolute the difference between the self and the world and the dualism within the universe, this turning away from society, this flight from life, and above all from Eros, is by no means a basic principle which dominates the whole life and work of Plato. At the very peak of both is to be seen an opposing tendency, the dominance of the will to live and love. If Plato was to find the way back to the world and first and foremost to society, if he was to cut away the basis of the philosophical separation from earthly existence and especially from the State, if the philosopher was to become the ruler, then it was first necessary that his own internal schism, this schism which produced the primary isolating, anti-erotic, ascetic, self-destructive desperation, be overcome. Plato was obliged to find the courage to self-acknowledgment, to self-acceptance of his erotic nature. And this courage he did find. One of his most charming works, one of the most beautiful poems to which he gave utterance, the dialogue "Symposium," testifies to this.

(a) *Lysis*. In the somewhat gloomy thoughts of the dialogue dedicated to the nature of friendship, in the not very harmonious

<sup>1</sup> Phaedo (82 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Phaedo (115 St.)

music of the "Lysis," is to be heard already clearly the motif which subsequently is strongly developed in the "Symposium," the justification of the Platonic Eros. The real views of Plato are not easily shelled out of the conversation between Socrates and his two friends Menexenos and Lysis in the presence of Hippothales, the lover of Lysis. The conversation is quite resultless, and in part completely empty speculation. Scarcely is a theme broached, when it is allowed to drop. Yet in the process there show up opinions which Plato unreservedly espouses in later dialogues, especially in the "Symposium," and "Phaedrus." And so the comparison with these two dialogues offers the possibility of learning what Plato was aiming at in the almost nebulous and weak lines of the "Lysis." From the labyrinth of verbal disputes Plato seeks an egress:

"Let us proceed no further in this direction (for the road seems to be getting troublesome), but take the other path into which we turned, and see what the poets have to say; for they are to us in a manner the fathers and authors of wisdom."<sup>1</sup>

The information which the poets give about the nature and origin of friendship is very characteristic:

"They speak of friends in no light or trivial manner, but God himself, as they say, makes them and draws them to one another";<sup>2</sup> so that also these marriages are made in Heaven. With reference to the poets who say

"God is ever drawing like towards like . . . ,"

the fundamental proposition — frequently also used by Plato elsewhere — is asserted,

"that like must love like,"

a postulate designed more than any other to justify the Platonic Eros. More particularly then when, as in the "Lysis," it has to be understood in the sense

"that the good are like one another, and friends to one another; and that the bad, as is often said of them, are never at unity with one another or with themselves; for they are passionate and restless";<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lysis (213/14)

<sup>2</sup> Lysis (214)

<sup>3</sup> Lysis (214 St.)



and consequently quite unfitted for friendship. As the first conclusion one may thus — although it is not specifically asserted as such — assume:

"that the good only is the friend of the good, and of him only; but that the evil never attains to any real friendship, either with good or evil."<sup>1</sup>

Friends — like Lysis and Menexenos or Lysis and Hippothales — can only be men who are good.

And friendship itself, of which examples are given by the conversation, once in the unsensual relationship of Menexenos, and again in the wholly and completely sensual one of Hippothales to Lysis, is something good, even friendship based on passion. For even should evil disappear from the world, there would still be hunger and thirst and other such urges, so also friendship and love, and that could not be the case if friendship or love, even the friendship and love resting on lust, were something evil. This is the basic thought, which can clearly be discerned in the following part of the dialogue:

"But, Oh! will you tell me, I said, whether if evil were to perish we should hunger any more, or thirst any more, or have any similar desire? Or may we suppose that hunger will remain while men and animals remain, but not so as to be hurtful? And the same of thirst and the other desires — that they will remain, but will not be evil because evil has perished? Or rather shall I say, that to ask what either will be then or will not be is ridiculous, for who knows? This we do know, that in our present condition hunger may injure us, and may also benefit us: — Is not that true?

Yes.

And in like manner thirst or any similar desire may sometimes be a good and sometimes an evil to us, and sometimes neither one nor the other?

To be sure.

But is there any reason why, because evil perishes, that which is not evil should perish with it?

None.

Then, even if evil perishes, the desires which are neither good nor evil will remain?

Clearly they will.

And must not a man love that which he desires and affects?

He must.

Then, even if evil perishes, there may still remain some elements of love or friendship.

<sup>1</sup> Lysis (214 St.)

Yes.

But not if evil is the cause of friendship: for in that case nothing will be the friend of any other thing after the destruction of evil; for the effect cannot remain when the cause is destroyed.

True.

And have we not admitted already that the friend loves something for a reason? and at the time of making the admission we were of opinion that the neither good nor evil loves the good because of the evil?

Very true.

But now our view is changed, and we conceive that there must be some other cause of friendship?

I suppose so.

May not the truth be rather, as we were saying just now, that desire is the cause of friendship; for that which desires is dear to that which is desired at the time of desiring it? and may not the other theory have been only a long story about nothing?

Likely enough."<sup>1</sup>

The desire is the "cause of friendship," and that means the body, which must surely be taken in the sense of the views put forth by Plato, in particular in the "Phaedo" as kindred to the desires, or equivalent to the desires. The body, however, is here — in the "Lysis" — not the evil, is no more absolutely opposed to the soul as to the good. The body is, of course, not the good:

"But the human body, regarded as a body, is neither good nor evil."<sup>2</sup>

Thus does Plato later in the "Symposium" characterize the urge to love. And already in the "Lysis," yet still more clearly in the "Symposium," the contrast between good and evil is freed from the stagnation of the absolute, it is relativized. There is something neither-good-nor-evil, and that is the body. As the neither-good-nor-evil, it is not as in the "Phaedo" the tomb of the soul, but a thoroughly legitimate element of friendship: for just as such it is the root of the striving for the good. For one can only want and desire what one is not oneself or does not have.

"So I contend for the foreseeing spirit" — which foresight becomes a certainty in the "Symposium" — "what is neither good nor evil is the friend of the beautiful and the good."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lysis (221 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Lysis (217 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Lysis (216 St.)

The desire, which is at the base of friendship, is designated as *οἰκεῖον*, i.e. verbally: the congenial, the being congenial to one (the friend and the beloved are congenial to one another). This *οἰκεῖον* is in fact the good.

"If we say that the congenial is the same as the good, in that case the good and he only will be the friend of the good?"<sup>1</sup>

asks Socrates, and his partner agrees. This is the deepest meaning of friendship, this is the living compulsion among the friends, which directs their strivings: to the truly good.

"All those other things which, as we say, are dear for the sake of another, are illusions and deceptions only, but where that first principle is, there is the true ideal of friendship."<sup>2</sup>

Plato does not expressly say it, but it can be only the absolute good that is dear in itself and not for the sake of another.<sup>3</sup>

"That which is only dear to us for the sake of something else is improperly said to be dear, but the truly dear is that in which all these so-called dear friendships terminate."

"And the truly dear or ultimate principle of friendship is not for the sake of any other or further dear."<sup>4</sup>

But if this last goal is the idea of the good, then such an interpretation of Eros is its greatest justification.

Although the dialogue "Lysis" is only the first groping attempt at a philosophical glorification of Eros, which here still appears as *φιλία*, is preferably still called friendship, it is already the same basic position which we see so vigorously put in the "Symposium."<sup>5</sup>

(b) *Symposium*. This immortal poem is an apology for the peculiar Platonic Eros, a defense of homosexual love against the

<sup>1</sup> Lysis (222 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Lysis (219 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Significantly, Apelt observes in the introduction to his translation of Lysis (Philos. Bibl. Bd. 177, 2. Aufl., 1922, p. 74): "The climax to which he attains, the relation to the idea of the good, emerges clearly above the enshrouding clouds, and if the clouds soon reassemble, the attentive reader still has the clear feeling that the solution to the riddle has been given: true friendship is only possible between good men; for it is nothing else than unity in the love of the good."

<sup>4</sup> Lysis (220 St.)

<sup>5</sup> For this reason I believe it is improbable that the "Lysis" was written after the "Symposium." If one compares the position which Plato takes to the problem of Eros in both dialogues, only the reverse relationship can come into question. Cf. also Raeder: Platons philosophische Entwicklung. 2. Aufl. 1920, pp. 154 sqq.; and in particular Lagerborg *op. cit.*, p. 92.

usual reproaches, which are not expressed openly in the dialogue but are nevertheless to be presupposed, a defense above all against the accusation of an antisocial character of this Eros; and it is not, as is mostly assumed, and as it might appear from the words of Phaedrus cited in the introduction of the dialogue, a glorification of love in general, of love in all its manifold forms.

"What a strange thing it is . . . that, whereas other gods have poems and hymns made in their honor, the great and glorious god, Eros, has no encomiast among all the poets who are so many."<sup>1</sup>

For the Eros for whom each of the friends gathered at the banquet is supposed to give a panegyric — "going from left to right" — is none other than the boy-loving Eros. As to this, Phaedrus who takes the lead, leaves no doubt. Speaking as if there could not be any other form of love but the homosexual, he begins to praise this Eros as the oldest of the gods and at the same time the source of the greatest benefits. He refers to Hesiod, Parmenides and Acusilaus and continues:

"And not only is he the eldest, he is also the source of the greatest benefits to us. For I know not any greater blessing to a young man who is beginning life than a virtuous lover, or to the lover than a beloved youth."<sup>2</sup>

This is the Eros whom Phaedrus and with him also all the other speakers have in mind. And immediately in his first speech Plato remembers to put forward the socially desirable function of this Eros; without it, neither the individual nor, even more, the State can produce great and beautiful works. For the relationship between the lover and the beloved awakens and maintains a sense of honor, courage, readiness for sacrifice, every characteristic that guarantees the continuance of society. From the examples given by Phaedrus: Alcestis, who is ready to die for her husband; Orpheus, who descended into Hades for his wife; Achilles, who dies avenging Patroclus, it appears, to be sure, that love between man and woman also is not without moral value.<sup>3</sup> But they show clearly that Plato placed higher worth on the homosexual Eros, as far as its value for society is

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (177 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (178 St.)

<sup>3</sup> In the example of Alcestis it is striking in this connection that the woman does not here play her natural passive role but, quite in the contrary, that of the — active — lover. Cf. Rettig *op. cit.*, p. 424.

concerned: the gods honor Achilles above Alcestis, send him to the Islands of the Blest.<sup>1</sup> And the second panegyric also, that of Pausanias, relates only to boy-love and, still more clearly than the eulogy of Phaedrus, does he esteem it above the love between man and woman.<sup>2</sup> In this speech also the stress is laid on the affirmative value of homosexual love for the State. Pausanias interprets the — at that time already current — distinction between a higher spiritual-heavenly and a lower, merely earthly love, between Eros Uranios and Eros Pandemos quite definitely in favor of the homosexual. It is said that Aphrodite who is associated with the Uranian Eros in that she is the daughter of Uranus, is "older and motherless." This already indicates the homosexual ideal of motherless procreation. And directly from this is deduced that this Uranian Eros, this higher form of spiritual love, is only love of boys, that only the love of man for man, homosexual love, can develop into this higher form. This Eros, who is the offspring

"of the heavenly Aphrodite, is derived from a mother in whose birth the female has no part—she is from the male only; this is that love which is of youths, and the goddess being older, there is nothing of wantonness in her. Those who are inspired by this love turn to the male, and delight to see him who is the more valiant and intelligent nature."<sup>3</sup>

Nothing is more characteristic of Plato than that he sees in the Uranian Eros only the love of youths, nothing shows more clearly the abyss which exists between him on this point — but only on this point — and the world of Christianity, whose heavenly love is related to the Virgin-Mother; nothing is more characteristic for the tendency of the whole dialogue than this: Plato held that only the homosexual, but not the heterosexual love was capable of being raised above the depths of the merely sensual, towards a more spiritual form. This turn, that love of youths was, from its nature, a more spiritual love, that — quite otherwise than the love for a woman — it had the inner tendency to refine itself into such a heavenly form, serves essentially to prove that this Eros stood in harmony with the Athenian

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (180 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Krueger: *Einsicht und Leidenschaft. Das Wesen des platonischen Denkens*, 1939, p. 99 says that the speech of Pausanias has the clear tendency to be "an apology of pederasty."

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (181 St.)

morality. This seems — as already pointed out — to condemn homosexuality since the association of youths with their lovers is prohibited: Pausanias says literally:

"any one who reflects all this" (i.e. the measures taken to protect the boys against pederasty), "will . . . think that we hold these practices" — i.e. pederasty — "to be most disgraceful."<sup>1</sup>

Plato causes Pausanias to interpret the custom according to which any association of youths with their lovers is forbidden in such a way that it becomes compatible with his Eros. Only the sensual, not the spiritual love is forbidden. Eros is spiritualized, in order to become socializable. And he supports this interpretation in that he has Pausanias place the socially desirable qualities of this love in the foreground. The — spiritual — love of youth has the aim of improving the beloved youth's mind and body;<sup>2</sup> and

"according to our custom any one who does service to another under the idea that he will be improved by him either in wisdom, or in some other particular of virtue — such a voluntary service, I say, is not to be regarded as a dishonor . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Hence, even according to the Athenian morality which prohibited the boys to associate with their lovers, one could come

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (183 St.)

<sup>2</sup> According to Bethe *op. cit.*, pp. 462 sqq., the Dorians justified the homosexual practice with the consideration that the man communicated to the youth his soul, and with it his skill, magically in his semen. Thus they "spiritualized" pederasty in their fashion. In this ideology of homosexuality masculine semen — as well as the blood or the breath — partakes the character or the force of the soul (Bethe *op. cit.*, p. 466). That means, it was viewed as a moral substance, as the soul itself is, to a certain extent, the substantialization of ethical values. In Plato there is to be found the idea that the masculine semen is animated. In the "Timaeus" he puts forward the belief that the semen originates in the spinal cord, that the spinal cord thus contains the seminal substance. (86 St.). Here (91 St.) he says: "the gods created the generative impulse contriving in man one animated substance, and in woman another, which they formed respectively in the following manner. The outlet for drink by which fluids pass into the bladder, which receives and then by the pressure of the air emits them, was so fashioned by them as to penetrate also into the body of the marrow, which passes from the head along the neck and through the back, and which in the preceding discourse we have named the seed. And the seed having life (animated), and becoming endowed with respiration, produces in that part in which it respire a lively desire of emission, and thus creates in us the love of procreation. Wherefore also in men the organ of generation becoming rebellious and masterful, like an animal disobedient to reason and maddened with the sting of lust, seeks to gain absolute sway." Plato clearly has the idea that the semen are "corpuscles of marrow," "detached from the main substance" (Ritter, *Platons Dialoge I*, 1903, p. 144/5).

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (184 St.)



to the conclusion that the beloved may indulge the lover. One must only put together the two customs, the one according to which the association of youths and their lovers is forbidden,<sup>1</sup> and the other, according to which it is not a dishonor to improve one another.

"and then the beloved may honorably indulge the lover."

"Thus noble in every case is the acceptance of another for the sake of virtue. This is that love which is the love of the heavenly goddess, and is heavenly, and of great price to individuals and the state, making the lover and the beloved alike eager in the work of their own improvement."<sup>2</sup>

Of great price, above all: to the state! For that he might be dangerous to the state, against this argument it was essential to take an attitude. Yes, Pausanias does not shrink at all to utilize a political interest in favor of homosexuality, when he commends it to the Athenian Demos — as democratic. The masculine Eros is hostile to the tyrant, he says; that is shown by Harmodius and Aristogeiton whose love had prepared an end of tyranny.

"Therefore, the ill-repute into which these attachments have fallen is to be ascribed to the evil condition of those who make them to be ill-reputed, that is to say, to the self-seeking of the governors and the cowardice of the governed; on the other hand, the indiscriminate honor which is given them in some countries is attributable to the laziness of those who held this opinion of them."<sup>3</sup>

"The indiscriminate honor which is given to them" means: that it is not demanded that the beloved yield to the lover "honorably," i.e. spiritually, "with a view to virtue and improvement." Such an attitude is explained by "laziness." The mildness of this judgment on the youth-loving Eros Pandemos is remarkable in view of the energetic tendency to justify it by

<sup>1</sup> Plato lets Pausanias say: "And these two customs, one of the love of youth and the other the practice of philosophy and virtue in general, ought to meet in one, and then the beloved may honorably indulge the lover." Pausanias speaks only of the custom of "the love of youth"; but what Plato has here in mind is evidently the custom characterized by the words: "when parents forbid their sons to talk with their lovers . . ." etc. (183 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (185 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (182 St.)

spiritualizing it.<sup>1</sup> And this mild attitude shows up still more clearly in the "Phaedrus." There, the question concerns the destiny in the hereafter of these friends who in a weak moment "choose and accomplish the desire of the heart which to the many is bliss."

And to this question is given the following answer:

"At last they pass out of the body, unwinged, but eager to soar, and thus obtain no mean reward of love and madness. For those who have once begun the heavenward pilgrimage may not go down again to darkness and the journey beneath the earth, but they live in light always; happy companions in their pilgrimage, and when the time comes at which they receive their wings they have the same plumage because of their love."<sup>2</sup>

In the speech of the physician Eryximachus the preference for the homosexual Eros as against the heterosexual makes the least perceptible impression, as is comprehensible. Plato here contents himself to let his Eros be justified from the medical standpoint; and also in that speech the homosexual Eros is dealt with, against which objections might have been raised from a medical point of view, too. The most characteristic passages in the physician's speech are the following:

The "division of love into two sorts appears to me a good one."<sup>3</sup>

"Well-ordered men, and the less regular only so as to bring them to better order, should be indulged in this Love (Eros), and this is the sort we should preserve; this is the noble, the Heavenly Love sprung from the Heavenly Muse. But the Popular Love (Eros) comes from the Queen of Various Song; in applying him we must proceed with all caution, that no debauchery be implanted with the reaping of his pleasure . . ."

"Note how even the system of the yearly seasons is full of these two forces; how . . . heat and cold, drought and moisture, when brought together by the orderly Love, and taking on a temperate

<sup>1</sup> The speech of Pausanias is in fact — as B. Jowett remarks in the introduction to his translation of the "Symposium" — "extremely confused." This confusion is due to the intention of bringing the pederastic Eros into some sort of harmony with the disapproving attitude of the Athenians. Symonds, *A Problem*, p. 31, says with reference to Jowett's remark: "It is precisely on this account that it is valuable. The confusion indicates the obscure conscience of the Athenians." In Athens, the moral attitude was a divided one. And the moral conflict into which the problem of pederasty threw society reflected itself in the tragic conflict in the breast of Plato.

<sup>2</sup> *Phaedrus* (256 St.)

<sup>3</sup> *Symposium* (186 St.) (Translated by W. R. M. Lamb, The Loeb Classical Library).

harmony as they mingle, become bearers of ripe fertility and health to men and animals and plants, and are guilty of no wrong (*οὐδὲν ἡδίκησεν*). But when the wanton-spirited Love gains the ascendant in the seasons of the year, great destruction and wrong (*ἡδίκησεν*) does he wreak."<sup>1</sup>

"Thus Love, conceived as a simple whole, exerts a wide, a strong, nay, in short, a complete power: but that which is consummated for a good purpose, temperately and justly . . . wields the mightiest power of all and provides us with a perfect bliss."<sup>2</sup>

The decisive point seems to be that Eros, if he is not debauched, does not harm, or — as Eryximachus says — does no wrong. Here, too, the social standpoint is not forgotten.

(c) *The Eros myth of Aristophanes*. Most conclusive for the view of Eros which was current at the banquet of Phaedo is the speech of Aristophanes. For the myth, which Plato puts into the mouth of the writer of comedies, was designed not only to assure to homosexual love, also in its earthly form,<sup>3</sup> the proper rank with regard to any other form of love, but also to defend it from the reproach of being against nature. The more than paradoxical phantasy of this myth can scarcely be explained otherwise: for what else can Plato have had in mind with the grotesque-comic idea of the three kinds of spherical men, with four legs and four arms, a double visage and in particular a double sex organ? Nowhere else does he express his preference for the masculine homosexuality to any other kind of eroticism so drastically as here where he has the spherical double man spring from the sun, the double woman from the earth, and the man-woman from the moon, and compares the latter — certainly not without intention — to hermaphroditism when he says of the double being composed of the masculine and feminine elements:

"the word 'androgynous' is only preserved as a term of reproach."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (187/188 St.) (Lamb)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (188 St.) (Lamb)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Symposium (191 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Symposium (189 St.)

Since Zeus divided the double men<sup>1</sup> to punish them for their *hybris*, there sprang from this inferior sort, from the men-women, those who now passed as normal, a type of men and women who erotically attract one another. Plato knew nothing more he could say of them than:

"Men who are a section of that double nature which was once called androgynous are lovers of women; adulterers are generally of this breed, and also adulterous women who lust after men."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Just with this splitting of the spheric men into two, the comic-grotesque feature in the description of Aristophanes shows up clearly. Zeus cut them into two halves "like a pear which is halved for pickling, or as you might divide an egg with a hair." Now man must walk on two legs, while previously he "could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on his four hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over" with their legs in the air, because they were like their parents, the sun, moon, and earth (189 St.) Zeus threatened he would, if they continued to be insolent and would not be quiet, split them once again, so that they would have to hop about on a single leg. Mankind who had come about through being halved, had each one sex organ. But they wore them behind and were consequently unable to gratify their sex impulses with each other. And they sowed their seed not in one another, but like grasshoppers in the ground. Zeus took pity on them and "turned the parts of generation round to the front," so that "after the transposition male generated in the female, in order that by the mutual embraces of man and woman they might breed, and the race continue; or, if man came to man, they might be satisfied, and rest, and go their ways to the business of life" (191 St.). Therefore, that men should be happy, Zeus was obliged to give their sex parts a reversal, he must turn them from outward to the inward. It is the same idea of a radical "reversal" which plays a decisive role in the myth of the "Statesman," and which is very characteristic for the psychology of the homosexual.

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (191 St.) Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 24, comments that the idea of a double man, who represents the union of a man with a woman and is split into two sexually different beings by God at the beginning of the second world period, belongs to the ideology of the old Persian religion. He believes it possible that the Aristophanian myth sprang from this source. But the emphasis in the description which Plato puts in the mouth of Aristophanes is not on the man-woman, but on the man-man double figure. This is surely a most intensely personal product of Platonic phantasy, for by this device homosexual love was intended to be justified. It seems that the myth which Plato puts in the mouth of Aristophanes has its source in Orphic ideas. Theodor Hopfner, *Das Sexualleben der Griechen und Römer*, I. Bd., 1. Hefte, 1938, p. 9 sq., writes: "According to the early Hellenistic-Greek speculation, the original man was a hermaphrodite because the original gods had a double sex . . . Especially the Orphics believed in the existence of androgynous deities. 'Orpheus taught that God was man and woman in one, because otherwise he could not procreate, unless by a coitus with himself' (Lactant. Inst. div. IV, 8, 4)." — Konrad Ziegler, *Mensch- und Weltwerden*, Neue Jahrbücher fuer das klassische Altertum, 16. Jahrgang, 1913, Erste Abteilung, XXXI. Bd., pp. 561–564, states that according to Orphic cosmogony the world was originally a big egg which comprised masculine and feminine nature. The egg burst, and the upper half became Uranus, the male Heaven, the lower half Gaia, the female earth. Ziegler refers to another tradition, according to which the two halves of the world-egg were Uranus and Pluto, two male beings. Ziegler's attempt, however, to prove the Orphic origin of this version, too, is not convincing. He is not quite right in saying (p. 566): "The Aristophanic-Platonic anthropogony is a repetition of the Orphic cosmogony on a smaller scale (with reference to the microcosmos)." It is not merely a repetition; it is a very characteristic modification of the Orphic cosmogony, characteristic of Plato's psychic condition.

But of those who sprang from double men, and those are the men who can only love men, because love in terms of this myth only means to long for the other half and to be united with it, it runs:

"But those who are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being slices of the original man, they hang about men and embrace them, and they are themselves the best of boys and youths, because they have the most manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and they embrace that which is like them. And these, when they grow up *become our statesmen, and these only*, which is a great proof of what I am saying. When they reach manhood they are lovers of youth, and are not naturally inclined to marry or beget children, — if at all, they do so only in obedience to the law; but they are satisfied if they may be allowed to live with one another unwedded."<sup>1</sup>

In this characterization it is especially significant that the homosexual alone is predestined for the life of statesman. But the decisive words, that reveal the most essential and deepest sense of this strangest of all the Platonic myths, are to be found in the following passage, which is the direct continuation of the one previously quoted:

"And when one of them meets with his other half, the actual half of himself, whether he be a lover of youth or a lover of another sort, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and one will not be out of the other's sight, as I may say, even for a moment: these are the people who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not explain what they desire of one another . . ."

Suppose Hephaestus with his instruments — Plato has Aristophanes continue —

"to come to the pair who are lying side by side and to say to them 'What do you people want of one another?' they would be unable to explain. And suppose further, that when he saw their perplexity he said: 'Do you desire to be wholly one; always day and night to be in one another's company? For if this is what you desire, I am ready to melt you into one and let you grow together, so that being two you shall become one, and while you live you live a common life as if you were a single man, and after your death in the world below still be one departed soul instead of two — I ask whether this is what

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (191 St.)

you lovingly desire, and whether you are satisfied to attain this?' — there is not a man of them who when he heard the proposal would deny or would not acknowledge that this meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one instead of two, was the very expression of his ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the two whole is called love."<sup>1</sup>

"The pair who are lying side by side" are — if not exclusively so at least also and in the first place — a man and his boy-friend. Earlier Aristophanes had said that the men showing love of youths were by the nature of their senses not inclined to marriage and begetting of children, but forced to this by the laws. Now he announces positively that it is the "original nature" which impels man to man. The question of Hephaistus, as can clearly be seen from the connection, is directed only, or in the first place, to men loving men. Their Eros is above all to be interpreted as the "pursuit of the whole." Only in its further wanderings does the discourse of Aristophanes become so general that it also can be applied to the other forms of Eros. At the end he says:

"I am serious, and therefore I must beg Eryximachus not to make fun or to find any allusion in what I am saying to Pausanias and Agathon, who, as I suspect, are both of the manly nature, and belong to the class which I have been describing. But my words have a wider application — they include men and woman everywhere; and I believe if our loves were perfectly accomplished, and each one returning to his *primeval nature* had his original true love, then our race would be happy."

He concludes these words with the praise plea to Eros:

"He will restore us to our original nature (*εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν*) and heal us and make us happy and blessed."<sup>2</sup>

By these words of Aristophanes, Plato intends with especial emphasis to plead that the homosexual love just as the heterosexual is in no way against nature, as has been reproached to, and as even Plato himself in his latest age has accused it to be; that it is directly the contrary, since it goes back to an "original nature." Primarily to show this, Plato has contrived his myth; to free love of youth from the reproach of unnaturalness, he has

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (192 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (193 St.)



gone to the utmost possible extreme of the esthetic, his description has gone to a point where the tragic almost verges on the comic, and the serious is no longer to be distinguished from the joke. Perhaps not without intention; perhaps we have in fact to do here with an expression of that puzzling Platonic irony, in which this peculiar spirit was accustomed to express just that which to him was most serious. And perhaps it shows just here the deepest root of this irony: which comes only from the shame arising in eroticism, the shame of disclosing his ultimate being, this almost moving gesture of embarrassment, of hiding the serious with joking, of giving oneself joking where one is ashamed of showing earnestness, i.e. of showing oneself, one's innermost, being naked.

(d) *Diotima's doctrine of love.* The last word which Plato has to say in defense of his Eros is, of course, not Aristophanes' ironic myth. It is Socrates' report on the doctrine of Diotima for which the speech of Agathon had to give the cue. But even in his relatively modest role Agathon says something important enough from the standpoint of Plato's justification of pederasty; and it is again the reproach of hostility to the State against which the speech of the beautiful and much beloved youth is directed. Insofar as he describes the man-to-man Eros as the expression of the highest law: that like always tends to like,<sup>1</sup> he wants to represent him as, himself a legislating, socializing force.

"The ancient doings among the gods of which Hesiod and Parmenides spoke, if the tradition of them be true, were done of Ananke (necessity) and not of Eros; had Eros been in those days, there would have been no chaining or mutilation of the Gods, or other violence, but peace and sweetness, as there is now in heaven, since the rule of Eros began (ἐξ οὗ Ἔρως τῶν θεῶν βασιλεύει)." <sup>2</sup>

The greatest thing one can say of Eros is:

"His great glory is that he can neither do nor suffer wrong to or from any god or any man; for he suffers not by force if he suffers; force comes not near him, neither when he acts does he act by force. For all men in all things serve him of their own free will, and where there is voluntary agreement, as the laws which are the lords of the city say, is justice. And not only is he just . . ." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (195 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (195 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (196 St.)

That is the nucleus of Agathon's speech. And it concludes that Eros, the Eros who has been spoken of in this circle, is good and therefore also beautiful.

"Therefore, Phaedrus, I say of Eros that he is the fairest and best in himself, and the cause of what is fairest and best in all other things"; — "leader best and brightest, in whose footsteps let ever man follow."<sup>1</sup>

Here, now, begins the train of thought with which Plato, as usual under the mask of Socrates, apotheosizes his Eros to justify it for himself and the world. Of course, the bridge in the dialogue, which takes Plato over from the position of Agathon to that of Socrates, logically stands on a very weak foundation. Socrates seeks to provide that Eros can be neither good nor beautiful because it is a demand for something, and since one cannot demand and desire what one already possesses. Eros as desire for the good and beautiful cannot be good and beautiful itself. This is fallacious. Eros is the desire, not the desired, and the desire for good and beauty could be good and beautiful, if that was not what one desired. Quite aside from this displacement of the subject from the desiring to the desired — facilitated by the personification of desire, which is represented in Eros — it is the love for a man about which alone all the oratory has been about: and love for man is something else than desire for a thing; even if that be identified with "love" for a virtue, for the good or the beautiful. That goodness and beauty is denied to Eros, because Eros is itself the desire for goodness and beauty, constitutes no logical conclusion but at the most an analogy, and even that a false one. But Plato obviously did not aim at a logical argumentation.<sup>2</sup> He was striving for a moral justification of his Eros. Confronted with the fearful alternative posed by the absolute opposition of good and evil, his Eros — this Plato felt most deeply — could not stand. That this impulse running counter to what was right and proper could be absolutely good,

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (197 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Very shrewdly Kurt Hildebrandt remarks in his introduction to his translation of Plato's "Symposium" (Phil. Bibl. Bd. 81, 5. Aufl. 1912, p. 16): That Socrates, however, does not proceed very logically according to our conceptions, can be deduced very easily from his oration. From this it may be concluded that for Socrates the logical argumentation is not the ultimate goal. He wishes to introduce the new, grander idea of Eros . . . for this logic is only the means, and a minor deficiency in it is not so important to him: the basis and goal of his existence lies elsewhere."

that as a whole and in all of its expressions it was pure, that it in no way and in none of its activities was related to the evil and dark powers, all this the sufferer from these passions, seeking always to overcome them, could not assert with a good conscience. But how can human nature, how can the world of our experience stand the proof if the opposition between good and evil is absolute? This opposition must be taken as relative unless man, his whole world is to be morally condemned. Not as good *or* as evil, but only as good *and* evil simultaneously must man and his world of experience be conceived. The attempt to believe both to be only one must be renounced, in order not to be forced to recognize in each only the other. One dare not ask as to the existence, i.e. the being of good or of evil, the good or evil existence of men and the world, for then both would be lost. Only the quest for the coming into existence that can lead from the evil to the good, in the direction of the good seems feasible. Then man and his world are saved. From being, from the existential form of the absolute good, it is true, they continue to be excluded. But the coming into existence, to which they belong, is movement towards the good, secures the possibility of the ascent to the absolute. That is the abolition of the fearful dualism which had split the Platonic world, and at the same time a solution of the conflict between the impulse, felt as sinful and repudiated by society, and the moral demands of this society felt in one's conscience. The Platonic view of the world takes an optimistic turn, the Platonic philosophy develops a tendency which again brings it into connection with this world.

It is Diotima who produces this solution. She is the social-moralistic consciousness that forces Socrates-Plato to admit that his Eros is neither good nor beautiful. But to the anxious question:

"What do you mean, Diotima, is love then evil and foul?" she gave answer: "Hush, must that be foul which is not fair?" . . . "And is that which is not wise, ignorant? do you not see that there is a mean between wisdom and ignorance?"

Between good and evil; for the good and the knowledge about the good are for Socrates one and the same, and the evil is nothing else but the absence of knowledge about the good, is ignorance. There is, teaches Diotima, something that

"is a mean between wisdom and ignorance."

"Right opinion."

"Do not insist that what is not fair is of necessity foul, or what is not good evil; or infer that because Eros is not fair and good, he is therefore foul and evil; for he is in a mean between them."<sup>1</sup>

That is the solution of his problem, and the salvation of his soul. And now the way is open to the supreme justification of his Eros. That is the idea which is so important, so liberating, for Plato, that his Eros is a mixture of good and evil, an intermediate something between earthly and heavenly, a mean between human and divine, even if not a god, then a daemon. This idea is once more represented mythologically, since Eros is interpreted as a child of male Poros or Plenty, and of the female Penia or Poverty. Then, the dialogue is directed in rapid, skillful fashion at the severest objection which is raised against the man-to-man love — an objection which as an old man Plato himself in his "Laws" has raised against pederasty — that it is not a reproductive, generative way of loving. And just here, the "Symposium" shows itself to be an apologetic pamphlet which at its climax will show nothing else, will seek to prove nothing else with the greatest expenditure of spirit and temperament, than that the Platonic Eros, quite like the love between man and woman, is a generative, nay more and in a higher sense than this, a fructifying and productive love.

For this purpose, Plato must first extend the concept of Eros in such a fashion that sexual love becomes only a special case of love, which he defines as the desire for good and the search for happiness. Thus he believes, to make good the fallacy we commit when

"one part of love is separated off and receives the name of the whole."<sup>2</sup>

The goal of all love is happiness. But being happy is only possible by being good.

"For there is nothing which men love but the good."<sup>3</sup>

Here, too, one must not look for logic but keep in mind only the purpose of the argument. It has already been indicated in the "Lysis": as with all love, the goal of Platonic love is the good.

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (202 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (205 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (206 St.)

The extension of the Eros concept beyond the immediately sexual, its spiritualization — already hinted at in the oration of Pausanias — is the essential presupposition needed to bring this love into connection with other than a simple physical form of procreation. Plato, and this is the decisive point for the argument here, places beside "procreation in body," "procreation in soul," beside somatic, spiritual reproduction, beside material perpetuation, immortality of the soul. This turn takes place in the conversation between Diotima and Socrates;

"Well," she said, 'I will teach you: — The object which they have in view is birth in beauty, whether of body or soul' . . . 'I will make my meaning clearer . . . I mean to say, that all men are bringing to the birth in their bodies and in their souls. There is a certain age at which human nature is desirous of procreation — procreation which must be in beauty and not in deformity; and this procreation is the union of man and woman, and is a divine thing; for conception and generation are an immortal principle in the mortal creature, and in the inharmonious they can never be. But the deformed is always inharmonious with the divine, and the beautiful harmonious. Beauty, then, is the destiny or goddess of parturition who presides at birth, and therefore, when approaching beauty, the conceiving power is propitious, and diffusive, and benign, and begets and bears fruit; at the sight of ugliness she frowns and contracts and has a sense of pain, and turns away, and shrivels up, and not without a pang refrains from conception. And this is the reason why, when the hour of conception arrives, and the teeming nature is full, there is such a flutter and ecstasy about beauty whose approach is the alleviation of the pain of travail. For love, Socrates, is not, as you imagine, the love of the beautiful only.

'What then?'

'The love of generation and of birth in beauty.'

'Yes,' I said.

'Yes, indeed,' she replied.

'But why of generation?'

'Because to the mortal creature, generation is a sort of eternity and immortality,' she replied; 'and if, as has been already admitted, love is of the everlasting possession of the good, all men will necessarily desire immortality together with good: Wherefore love is of immortality.'"<sup>1</sup>

Since immortality is asserted to be the meaning of procreation, spiritual procreation at which this whole argumentation aims, is already assured the precedence over somatic. But by the latter

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (206 St.)

there can be an "immortality" only in a very different sense of the words. Spiritual procreation, however, is bound up with the Platonic Eros and only with this, not with the — therefore lower — love for the other sex. But that the homosexual love is a "procreation" and a "parturition" by which the spiritual immortality is effected, Plato emphasizes to the utmost. To this purpose, just as earlier the concept of love, now the concept of procreation aiming at immortality is defined in a peculiar fashion. There is a "law of succession," says Diotima,

"by which all mortal things are preserved, not absolutely the same, but by substitution, the old worn-out mortality leaving another new and similar existence behind — unlike the divine, which is always the same and not another. And in this way, Socrates, the mortal body, or mortal anything, partakes of immortality; but the immortal in another way. Marvel not then at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and interest is for the sake of immortality."<sup>1</sup>

By this means man, therefore, becomes immortal, in that he leaves something behind, which is of his sort. This holds true as much for a child as for a spiritual work. And so Diotima gives an example of such procreation with the aim of immortality. She says to Socrates:

"Think only of the ambition of men, and you will wonder at the senselessness of their ways, unless you consider how they are stirred by the love of an immortality of fame. They are ready to run risks of all kinds and greater far than they would have run for their children, and to spend money and undergo any sort of toil, and even to die, for the sake of leaving behind them a name which shall be eternal. Do you imagine that Alcestis would have died to save Admetus, or Achilles to avenge Patroclus, or your own Codrus in order to preserve the kingdom for his sons, if they had not imagined that the memory of their virtues, which still survives among us, would be immortal? Nay,' she said, 'I am persuaded that all men do all things, and the better they are the more they do them, in hope of the glorious fame of immortal virtue; for they desire the immortal. Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children — this is the character of their love; their offspring, as they hope, will preserve their memory and give them the blessedness and immortality which they desire in the future. But souls which are pregnant — for there certainly are men who are more creative in their souls than in their bodies — conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive or contain."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (208 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (208 St.)



But he whose soul has become pregnant and desirous to procreate in the soul is the man who does not turn towards woman, but to man. This is assumed to be self-evident rather than expressly emphasized.

"And he who in youth has the seed of these implanted in him and is himself inspired, when he comes to maturity desires to beget and generate . . . for in deformity he will beget nothing — and naturally embraces the beautiful rather than the deformed body; above all when he finds a fair and noble and well-nurtured soul, he embraces the two in one person."<sup>1</sup>

It is the soul and body of a youth to whom this man pregnant in his soul, who does not wish to procreate in the body but in the soul, feels attracted; this arises from the point which is next described:

"and to such an one he is full of speech about virtue and the nature and pursuits of a good man; and he tries to educate him; and at the touch of the beautiful which is ever present to his memory, even when absent, he brings forth that which he had conceived long before, and in company with him tends that which he brings forth; and they are married by a far nearer tie and have a closer friendship than those who beget mortal children, for the children who are their common offspring are fairer and more immortal. Who, when he thinks of Homer and Hesiod and other great poets, would not rather have their children than ordinary human ones? Who would not emulate them in the creation of children such as theirs, which have preserved their memory and given them everlasting glory?"<sup>2</sup>

Since Plato places psychic production in parallel to somatic procreation, he can interpret that as well as this as a function of Eros. Only through love can one procreate. And as the love between man and woman leads to the generation and bearing of material children, so does the love of man for man — and here the sexual character shows through pretty clearly — lead to the procreation and bearing of spiritual children, immortal works. The love of beautiful youth likewise preserves the creative effort in the loving man, lets him give birth "to what he has conceived long before." Clearly, as can be seen from the already cited passage, Plato does not acquiesce in ascertaining that his Eros is not less creative than that between man and woman; he is convinced, and wishes to persuade others, that his Eros stands, just as a

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (209 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (209 St.)

procreating and producing love, at a higher level than normal sexual relation. Spiritual works are more valuable than mortal children:

"For many monuments, yes, temples, have been raised in the honour of great men for the sake of their spiritual children, which were never raised in honour of any one, for the sake of his mortal children."<sup>1</sup>

At this point Plato — as in many others of his Eros theory — has gone a step farther in the "Phaedrus." In this dialogue, Eros is not simply a "daemon" but a god, although here, too, Eros is regarded as a mean between good and evil. Only in the "Phaedrus" the emphasis clearly lies on the good; and the evil in it, the sensual component, weighs less heavy than in the "Symposium," is more mildly condemned. The state of love is called "madness": this madness, though, is not represented in any way as something absolutely bad, but as something relatively good, as a divine madness.

"It might be so if madness were simply an evil; but there is also a madness which is a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men."<sup>2</sup>

Such a divine blessing is that of love madness. The "gift" is the symbol of the reconciliation between god and man; Eros who puts men into a state of divine madness and so brings them near to the god, is quite similarly as in the "Symposium" a mean between the divine and the human. Love madness is interpreted by Plato, in an effort at justification, in the "Phaedrus" as a recollection of the eternally beautiful, the absolute good, experienced by the soul in the beyond prior to its bodily existence. He thus places it on a plane with the true knowledge which he — in the "Meno" — explains as a remembrance of the true essence of things, as seen by the soul in its pre-existence. The sight of the beautiful and therefore beloved man reminds the lover "of the true beauty" of which he partook in the beyond prior to his birth:

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (209 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Phaedrus (244 St.)

"every soul of man has in the way of nature beheld true being; this was the condition of her passing into the form of man. But all souls do not easily recall the things of the other world."<sup>1</sup>

Plato distinguishes two sorts of love just according to the degree of this recollection:

"Now he who is not newly initiated or who has become corrupted, does not easily rise out of this world to the sight of true beauty in the other; he looks only at her earthly namesake, and instead of being awed at the sight of her, he is given over to pleasure, and like a brutish beast he rushes on to enjoy and beget children (*παιδοσπορεῖν*); he consorts with wantonness, and is not afraid or ashamed of pursuing pleasure in violation of nature. But he whose initiation is recent, and who has been the spectator of many glories in the other world, is amazed when he sees any one having a godlike face or any bodily form which is the expression of divine beauty; and at first a shudder runs through him, and again the old awe steals over him; then looking upon the face of his beloved as of a god he reverences him, and if he were not afraid of being thought a downright madman, he would sacrifice to his beloved . . ."<sup>2</sup>

The beloved is, as can be seen beyond doubt from the following, a boy. Only at the sight of the beauty of the boy do feathers spring out of the lover, allowing his soul to grow wings. It is the homosexual Eros which Plato has in mind here, and it is the sensual fire which he—as we have seen above—describes in the "Phaedrus" with such feeling, and judges with such tolerance. It can admit of no doubt that here Plato places homosexual love as the love of what is more easily and better remembered of that seen on the beyond; the love of a beautiful youth is from the standpoint of this theory of remembrance the higher form of love, in opposition to normal sexual love. The latter is the recollection of a man who less easily and more badly remembers of that seen on the beyond and therefore cannot quickly advance from here to there, to the beautiful itself. It is more difficult for normal heterosexual love to remember the things of the beyond, starting from the here and now. Indeed, with an unheard of boldness Plato turns the common estimation of sexual things directly around and depreciates heterosexual

<sup>1</sup> Phaedrus (249 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Phaedrus (250/251 St.)

love, compared with the homosexual one, as brutish and against nature.<sup>1</sup>

That the "right method of boy-loving" (*ὁρθὴς παιδεραστειν*) is, in the highest sense of the word, "procreative" and "productive" love, that is not its greatest justification according to the Plato of the "Symposium." It is Diotima who discloses the ultimate secret of love. She indicates the steps on the path which leads to the topmost goal of all true philosophy, the highest peak of true knowledge, to the vision of the absolute good. And the first step on this way is the affectionate view of the beautiful body of a youth.

"He who would proceed rightly in this business must not merely begin from his youth to encounter beautiful bodies. In the first place, indeed, if his conductor guides him aright, he must be in love with one particular body and engender beautiful converse therein."<sup>2</sup>

From the affectionate look on the youth's beautiful body, however, the way leads beyond to love for a beautiful form as such, and this to the associated knowledge of the beautiful, i.e., to the good way of life, to the last step of the vision: the vision of the eternally beautiful, that here — in a fashion most significant for the philosophy of love of the "Symposium" — is equalled with

<sup>1</sup> Bruns, *op. cit.*, p. 21 sq. maintains in respect to the "Phaedrus" "with surprise" that Plato here treats of the essence of love in general, but speaks only of homosexual love. "We can only establish the omission and draw the conclusion that in the deliberations of Plato, which lead to the theory of the "Phaedrus" the love between the different sexes is completely ignored.—This onesidedness is historically quite comprehensible. Pausanias and Phaedrus in the "Symposium" and later Xenophon, believe themselves to be speaking about love as such, but treat only of the pederastic form. Only the love of youth interests these men, the love for women presents no problem to them." In the "Symposium," however, says Bruns who believes the "Symposium" to be the later work, Plato has filled in the omission which occurs in the "Phaedrus." When in the "Symposium" he approaches the question for the second time, he has broken completely with his first explanation. In particular, he now develops the theory of love "no longer with reference to homosexual love but to the love between the different sexes." This does not prove correct. In the "Phaedrus" he does not in any way ignore normal sexual love, but—as is shown in the text above—expressly mentions it, only that it is disqualified as animal lust. Xenophon does not only mention it but climaxes his "Symposium" with an apotheosis of this Eros. Herein lies the point against Plato's "onesidedness," which actually cannot be explained historically but only psychologically. This "onesidedness" is not less remarkable in the "Symposium" than in the "Phaedrus." To be sure, he recognizes in the "Symposium" the function of procreation as essential for love and hence apparently starts his consideration from the normal sexual love; but only for the purpose of justifying the homosexual form as the higher form of procreative love. In the "Symposium" also, Plato's Eros is identical with the love of youth.

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (210 St.) (Lamb)

the absolute good;<sup>1</sup> and the viewing is only permitted to those who attempt to ascend by the way of the youth-loving Eros.

"So when a man by the right method of boy-loving (*ὁρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν*) ascends from these particulars and begins to descry that beauty, he is almost able to lay hold of the final secret. Such is the right approach or induction to love matters. Beginning from obvious beauties, he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty."<sup>2</sup>

What a transformation of views lies between the "Gorgias" and the "Phaedo" on the one hand, and the "Symposium" and the "Phaedrus" on the other! The body with its sensuality is no longer the simple earthly evil, the tomb of the heavenly soul, the flesh which the philosopher mortifies, which he has to leave as soon as possible, in order to attain his purpose. That body is now the indispensable presupposition for attaining the goal; the love of it is already the first, the most significant step on the way to the good, a step with which already on earth the "heavenward

<sup>1</sup> It is Diotima who pronounces this identity of the good with the beautiful. In her conversation with Socrates the view is brought to maturity; Eros is love of the beautiful. "When a man loves the beautiful, what does he desire?" To which Socrates answers: "That the beautiful may be his." And Diotima asks: "What is given by the possession of beauty?" The answer should run that the possession of beauty gives happiness. In order to gain the answer easier, Diotima asserts that it is better to substitute the word "good" for "beautiful," since she obviously presupposes the two to be identical. "Then," she said, 'let me put the word "good" in the place of the beautiful, and repeat the question once more: if he who loves loves the good, what is it then that he loves?' 'The possession of the good,' I said, 'And what does he gain who possesses the good?' 'Happiness,' I replied, 'there is less difficulty in answering that question.' 'Yes,' she said, 'the happy are made happy by the acquisition of good things. Nor is there any need to ask why a man desires happiness; the answer is already final'" (Symposium 204/5 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (211 St.) (Lamb). The continuation of this passage runs as follows: "In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates, said the Mantinean woman, a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty. This, when once beheld, will outshine your gold and your vesture, your beautiful boys and striplings, whose aspect now so astounds you and makes you and many another, at the sight and constant society of your darlings, ready to do without either food or drink if that were any way possible, and only gaze upon them and have their company. But tell me, what would happen if one of you had the fortune to look upon essential beauty entire, pure and unalloyed: not infected with the flesh and colour of humanity, and ever so much more of mortal trash?"

pilgrimage"<sup>1</sup> begins; because with the love of the body the best in earthly life, true knowledge is established; and true knowledge is only the remembrance of that which the soul saw in the other world. That is surely the highest possible glorification of love. Later, Christianity has sanctified, in the image of the Holy Virgin, the love of man for woman and mother. Plato has raised the love of man for man, his Eros Paiderastikos, onto the heaven of metaphysics. He has justified for himself his Eros, by which he may well have been afflicted more than the dialogue betrays, and thus also he has justified it for the world and by this has morally justified, too, the world for himself. The bridge and path towards this justification of the world was for him Eros; Eros, which Diotima revealed to him as the daemonic mean between god and the world, between good and evil. To the question of Socrates as to the real nature of Eros, she answers:

"A great demon (*δαίμων*) and like all demons, he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal . . . he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together."<sup>2</sup>

What divides the Platonic world, binds it again. Eros has created the chorismos, Eros has dispelled it.

With this, the Platonic dualism assumes an optimistic character. The Platonic philosophy — with the tendency to relativity in its views of good and evil — takes a direction which points again to this world, and then aims at a unification of the world picture which now embraces also nature; a nature no longer interpreted ethically only but conceived as an existing reality which is not exclusively evil. This direction primarily leads to a positive attitude towards state and society.

## II. KRATOS

### 11. THE SOCRATIC WILL TO POWER

It is of the greatest significance that Plato even in the speech of Diotima brings forward the social character of his Eros which stands under the reproach of being antisocial. By the mouth of the seer he lets it be announced that the most beautiful children

<sup>1</sup> Phaedrus (256 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (202 St.)



generated in the soul by Eros are not so much poetry or works of pictorial art, but are rather social orders, state constitutions, laws, works of justice.

"But the greatest and fairest sort of wisdom" — and it is wisdom which the soul is fitted to procreate and conceive — "by far is that which is concerned with the ordering of states and families, and which is called temperance and justice."

And among the "immortal children" which are brought forth those more worth while than earthly-mortals are the laws of Solon and those children which

"Lycurgus left behind him to be the saviours, not only of Lacedaemon, but of Hellas."<sup>1</sup>

That is a most intensely personal avowal of Plato's, for the children his Eros wanted to engender through him were these: correct education of youth, the best laws, the just order of the state. Most clearly here is revealed the inner connection between the Platonic Eros and his will to power over man, between his erotic and his pedagogic-political passion.<sup>2</sup>

This connection of Eros and Kratos (might) Plato had already seen in Socrates, or, to say it more clearly, he had so seen himself and described in Socrates. For the urge to dominate is already in Socrates' manner of loving youth, most deeply hidden away. "The wise lover" — and this one point on which Socrates claims to have understanding — "does not praise his beloved until he has won him"; for he wants to make the loved one "pliable" and prevent his being filled "with the spirit of pride and vainglory," which would make him refractory. In such fashion does Plato have Socrates speak in the "Lysis."<sup>3</sup> And subsequently he gives an example to beloved Hippothales in the talk with Lysis of how one treats the beloved. He says:

"That is the way, Hippothales, in which you should talk to your beloved, humbling and lowering him, and not as you do, puffing him up and spoiling him."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (209 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Hildebrandt: Uebersetzung von Platons Gastmahl (Philos. Bibl. Bd. 81, 2. Aufl. Einleitung, p. 37): "When Diotima speaks of spiritual creation, she does not place the stress on poets and artists, but on legislation. Lycurgus' laws she calls the saviour of Greece. Here it is Plato himself who speaks, Plato whose soul at that time was pregnant with his "Republic," Plato who still had the hope to become the *soter* of Hellas."

<sup>3</sup> Lysis (206 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Lysis (210 St.)

And everywhere one receives the same impression of Socrates' love-technique. Thus in the description which Alcibiades gives of it in the "Symposium." It is not a pure and unstinted praise which the proud and in his drunkenness rather indiscrete youth gives of the "singular" man, who

"is fond of the fair . . . always with them and is always being smitten by them"

and yet spends his life "in mocking and flouting" at them;<sup>1</sup> all of whom he deceives,

"beginning as their lover he has ended by making them pay their addresses to him."<sup>2</sup>

Alcibiades felt ashamed in the presence of this man as he had never felt ashamed with any other;<sup>3</sup> he accuses him of "haughtiness,"<sup>4</sup> him who seems to be so modest; and finally has to confess:

"So I was at my wit's end; no one was ever more hopelessly enslaved by another."<sup>5</sup>

Surely this Eros wants to be humble and lower the beloved by showing him that he — the beloved — knows and understands nothing. It will break the self-confidence of the beloved by making him aware of his urgent need for the lover who demonstrates the insignificance of the beloved (and by this very fact his own superiority). Evidently, Socrates, the bourgeois, wishes to humble and lower the aristocratic youths who gather around him; hence he praises humility as a virtue. And he himself puts on a show of this virtue, because, by so doing, he experiences his greatest triumph. Perhaps — like his humility is only a mask — his Eros is just a kind of bait to gain obedient and blind admirers from among the golden youth of Athens.

This urge for power over men reveals also the whole intellectual attitude of Socrates, so far as we are able to reconstruct it from the writings of Plato and Xenophon. To be sure, he is always speaking about wisdom and seeking to fascinate through

<sup>1</sup> Symposium (216 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Symposium (222 St.) Lamb (The Loeb Classical Library) translates: ". . . his way of loving so deceitful that he might rather be their favourite than their lover."

<sup>3</sup> Symposium (218 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Symposium (219 St. and 222 St.)

<sup>5</sup> Symposium (219 St.)

the one medium of purely theoretical discussions; but not only objective interests can have finally determined the latter. The fact that these discussions are completely resultless, that they have an entirely critical and negative character, shows clearly that rather personal interests are involved. The only aim which Socrates pursues in his many talks is: to overpower his opponent with the formal dialectic of his skillfully developed game of question and answer. When he has shown that his opponent knows nothing, it does not bother him in the least, indeed, it gives him pleasure, to confess that he too knows nothing. If it was — as has perhaps been very rightly remarked — the passionate desire of Socrates to make proselytes,<sup>1</sup> then this is the most uncommon sort of creed to which one ever wished to convert men: the creed of not-knowing. Upon this he had in fact insisted with a "pathological dogmatism."<sup>2</sup> And just by the fact that he was able to overcome intellectually everything that got in his way, he was successful in conquering the admiring youths who formed his public. And thus it was not any particular doctrine against which he took the field; he simply opposed them all. In particular he worked against the tops of the Athenian society and their democratic ideology. This fact may have contributed to the success he had just in aristocratic circles; and, also, ultimately, led to his fate.<sup>3</sup> When Socrates extended his opposition to the Sophists and, in particular, aimed at their intellectual conceit, this is the more paradoxical, for he himself in his method of disputation is hardly to be differentiated from a Sophist. His method was that of disclosing, his pleasure was in tearing the mask from his opponent, of disillusioning, above all of destroying the illusion of democracy. In the greater "Alcibiades" (the genuineness of which has been denied, but which now seems to be granted again for good reasons),<sup>4</sup> Plato has Socrates say of the Athenian democracy, the favor of which was being wooed by the ambitious Alcibiades:

"For the demus of the great-hearted Erechtheus is of a fair countenance, but you should see him naked."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Howald, *Platons Leben*, 1923, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> E. Howald, *Die Anfaenge der europaeischen Philosophie*, 1925, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon*, I, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Friedlaender, *Der grosse Alcibiades. Ein Weg zu Platon*, 1921.

<sup>5</sup> *Alcibiades I* (132)

And yet this same destroyer of illusions was not without illusions himself. It was such which separated him from the Sophists, in that he tried to use their highly rationalistic method for a highly irrational purpose. What they denied was just exactly that which he believed, and the existence of which he ever again asserted: absolute value, the Good, Justice; yet he did not prove this, could not prove it with his rational methods and ultimately and at last admitted it could not be proven. This is surely the real ground for his not-knowing, that that which he would have liked to know, could not be known because it lay beyond the rational domain to which his method of dealing with logical concepts was restricted. But he never intended to establish any kind of positive doctrine. At least he never found it worth the effort to write down such a doctrine to leave it to posterity. Since at bottom he wished for nothing else than to influence men through the immediate effect of his spoken words, he won out as a man only, by way of his own humaneness.

## 12. VIRTUE IS KNOWLEDGE: AN IDEOLOGY OF PAIDEIA

THAT in Socrates — or, what amounts to the same, in the youthful Plato — the wish to dominate over men was stronger than the need to know the world, is shown most clearly by the singular thesis he puts forth so emphatically, and which forms the centre of the whole Socratic ethics: Virtue is knowledge. This famous thesis is so singular because it seems so thoroughly sophistic, but nevertheless is advocated by such a radical antagonist of the Sophists as Socrates. It appears to be sophistic, because it seems thoroughly rationalistic; but it runs — at least with Socrates — in a circle.<sup>1</sup> For virtue is for him the Good or the Just; and goodness or justice, when a matter of knowledge, cannot be considered as defined as long as the object of this knowledge is undetermined. There are many kinds of knowledge which obviously have nothing to do with virtue, with the Good or the Just. For instance, a perfect knowledge of chemistry. It is not any knowledge, it is only the knowledge of a specific object, which can be identified with virtue, i.e. with the Good or the Just. But to the question as to the object of this knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Cf. as to this Paul Natorp, *Platons Ideenlehre*, 2 ed. 1921, p. 189.

which is identical with Virtue, the Good, the Just, one can give no other answer than: the Good, the Just. Virtue is the knowledge of Virtue, the Good the knowledge of the Good, and he is just who knows what is just. But more peculiar even than that so sharp a thinker as Socrates should satisfy himself with such a result is the obvious inconsistency, which simple every-day experience shows, that the identification of virtue and knowledge is wrong. Life shows, as it always has, that it is of little avail to know what one ought to do, if one is too weak in the will to do it. That the spirit may be strong, while the flesh is weak, cannot remain hidden even to the simplest understanding. The Socratic thesis that no one intentionally does wrong, because he who knows the good also wants it, seems to be the result of an exaggerated, experience ignoring intellectualism. But it is too exaggerated to be considered as such. The Socratic dogma that virtue is knowledge is — in reality — the expression of the primacy of practical over theoretical reasoning. That he who knows the Good also wants it, could be believed only by one for whom there is no knowing independent of willing, since for him all knowing serves only for willing, for suitable activity, because theory is considered only as a means to practice. If Plato, and especially his Socrates, maintained this doctrine of the identity of virtue with knowledge, then it was because this doctrine furnished a justification for their basic psychic attitudes. And this attitude was characterized by the fact that their will to power, their wish to dominate over men was stronger than any other tendency. In Plato, just as in his Socrates, was a clear primacy of willing over knowing. Only he whose will has the primacy over his knowing is inclined to base — theoretically — virtue on knowledge. He whose intellectual component is stronger than his emotional one, who is more interested in understanding the world than in ruling over it, and therefore seeks for true knowledge, that is, knowing independent from willing, he whose psychic structure is characterized by the tendency towards a primacy of knowing over willing, is always inclined to base — theoretically — virtue on willing. Thus, willing and knowing shuffle — so to speak — virtue on to each other (put the blame of virtue on each other). This is not merely paradoxical. For a pure and true knowledge is conscious of its limitations, and therefore does not pretend to be the basis for

virtue. The will as will to power, however, needs a legitimization of the problematical fact that men dominate over men, and finds it in the idea that to master men means the same as to better them, i.e., to change them from evil to good, to make them virtuous, and so — happy. Therefore happiness must be identical with virtue, therefore a happy life can only be a virtuous one, and in consequence virtue must be transferable from master to mastered. But according to experience what is transferable is neither will nor feeling, only knowledge. Therefore, virtue must be knowledge, must be teachable. And so runs this basic proposition for the justification of the Socratic pedagogic.

For Paideia is the social form in which the Eros of Socrates unfolds its will to power. It does not seek to bend and form the will of adults, it does not wish to govern; education of youth, not government, is its only goal. Like his Eros, his will to power at bottom was stunted; and so his accomplishments remained stuck in pedagogy. Socrates was always protesting that he wanted to have nothing to do with the State, that he had no interest in politics.<sup>1</sup> That he nevertheless had a political effect presumably lay beyond his direct intentions. But he did not hesitate to draw from his basic dogma, virtue is teachable knowledge, the anti-democratic consequence that each has to practice only that which he has learned, that governing is just as much something to be learned as repairing shoes and mending clothes, and that consequently men who are only shoemakers and tailors are not to be called to rule. Even in its deepest spiritual form: "Know thyself," this dogma is open to an interpretation which directs its point against democracy. Also, from this point the conclusion can be drawn, that virtue which is knowledge of oneself, consists in everyone's doing what is his to do, i.e., that the cobbler must stick to his last.<sup>2</sup>

Yet in spite of his political influence Socrates was no statesman, only a pedagogue. As such, his figure has persisted in the history of civilization. And it is the basic pedagogic tendency of his thought which explains the purely ethical character of his speculations. If Socrates, completely ignoring the science of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Platons Stellung im Aufbau der griechischen Bildung*. Die Antike, IV. Bd., 1928, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. as to this Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 200.



nature, endeavored only to lay the theoretical foundation of ethics, — a vain endeavor since it is not possible on a purely rational basis — it was because Paideia, too, represents a relationship of domination, and because this relationship, the pedagogical authority, too, is not possible without an ethical justification; for the will of the educator, too, if it is to be imposed upon the one who is to be educated, has to be proven to be just. But as an ideology of Paideia, justice remained for Socrates a purely personal virtue. If he refers justice to the state, he is satisfied with identifying it with the positive legal order.

### 13. THE DAIMONION

As in every relationship of superiority and subordination, the pedagogic also finds its final grounds not in the domain of the ethico-rational, but in that of the religious. Only the absolutely good will has a claim to unconditional obedience, hence mastery in last analysis feels itself legitimized when it is considered as transmitting the divine will. Therefore the Socratic pedagogy also shows a certain disposition towards a religious ideology. Only a disposition, for like the erotic and political impulses of Socrates, his religiosity, too, is somehow inhibited. As those impulses have remained fixed in pedagogy, so has the religious in the demoniac. Socrates did not really believe in a life of the soul after death, neither had the transcendent gods for him any actual existence. But the *Δαίμόνιον*, his private god, was powerful in him, even when he characteristically confided to this inner voice only the negative function of refraining him from evil, from the forbidden, not a positive one of commanding good activities. A firm belief bound him to this demon, a belief, which was not the less irrational, even if one interprets it as a superstition, as one of those superstitions to which just rationalists are so often subjected.<sup>1</sup> And so, both may be right: those who consider Socrates to be a rationalist, and the others who believe him bound with his passions to the irrational.

### 14. PLATO'S COMPULSION TO PAIDEIA AND POLITEIA

PLATO had felt himself attracted by Socrates as to a kindred nature. But the Platonic dimensions were greater in every

<sup>1</sup> Howald, *Platons Leben*, p. 17.

respect. As his Eros was more passionate than that of Socrates, so also was his religiosity more deeply anchored, and had a much greater role to play in his life and doctrines. Not only because it sprang from the dark depths of his erotic guilt-feeling, but also because he was under the influence of the paternalistic tradition and grew up favored by the times, which — it was the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century — had brought about a mighty renaissance of religious feeling, formerly suppressed by the philosophy of nature and Sophistic doctrine, a sort of "wave of reactionary fear of God."<sup>1</sup> As the religion of his father or of his fathers, the folk-religion was sacred to him. As little as he, as a real conservative and opponent of democracy, considered the *will* of the people, so much the more he considered its belief to be authoritative, without considering whether this belief was consistent with his philosophy. This religiosity was the basis for the whole Platonic metaphysics; it was this religiosity in the fire of which the Socratic not-knowing was recasted into Platonic transcendentalism of all knowledge, above all into a transcendency of the true object of knowledge, the Good. For according to Plato's philosophy the knowledge of the Good cannot be reached by rational speculation, but only by mystic contemplation. It was this religiosity which through its enthusiasm converted the Socratic *Δαιμόνιον*, this mysterious private God, into the Mystery of the Platonic *'Αγαθόν*, an idea of the Good magnified into Godhood.<sup>2</sup> Socrates had asked what justice really was, but had been unable to give any answer to this question; he had contented himself rather with assuring that justice was something, not nothing, that there was a justice, but that one could really know nothing about it exactly, as with all other things. He was, so to speak, a heroic sceptic. Plato, however, asserted he knew what justice was, more correctly, he claimed to have "seen" justice. He sought it, but not like Socrates, in concepts. He asserted to have found it, and found it in immediate intuition, in the mystic perception of the idea.<sup>3</sup> But he declined to say what he had seen, for this it was in its nature something divine and therefore ineffable.

<sup>1</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Friedemann *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Friedlaender, *Platon*, I, p. 69.

Like the Eros, so also the urge to Kratos was in Plato more powerful than in Socrates. He intentionally drove on from the very beginning far beyond the narrow confines of Paideia to the wider realms of Politeia. He could not gain his satisfaction in the education of youth, he was able to find it only in the government over men. The state, however, was for him only a great educational institution. Because he could not attain leadership in the state, he founded a school; and thus the school became for him a substitute for the state.<sup>1</sup> Therefore Plato was fixed on Socrates more than by any other theory by the latter's persistent question as to the nature of justice, this legitimization of every political domination. But justice for Plato was more than merely a personal virtue. What he sought in it was not only personal salvation, but also and above all the ideal order of the state. And so for Plato it was not satisfactory — as it had been to Socrates — simply to identify justice with the positive law. He had to lift justice into the heavens to give the laws of the state and with these the authority of the state a grounding in the absolute. Therefore for Plato the Socratic dogma that knowledge is virtue, and as such teachable, became far more than a simple justification of pedagogy as the mastery of a teacher over a pupil; it became rather the basic proposition of his philosophy which was political through and through: that the philosopher and only the philosopher ought to govern the state; and therefore it became a justification of political domination in general. Whoever wishes to govern under the pretext of being a philosopher must — like Plato — stand for this thesis that the highest, indeed the unique subject of true philosophy, of genuine knowledge, is only the absolute Good, which embraces justice in itself; but that this knowledge — if the government ought to go not to the many but to the few only or only to one — is inaccessible but to a few choice spirits, perhaps only to a single divinely gifted man; he must, like Plato, assert that the true wisdom and the good will, that knowledge and virtue are one, because government, like education, is nothing else than the transference of virtue from the master to the mastered, and that in consequence virtue — as knowledge — must be communicable; the relation of mastery

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werner Jaeger, *op. cit.*, p. 169; "Education was for him the unique and real meaning of the state"; see further Friedlaender *op. cit.*, II, p. 363.

is transformed into a relation of education, *Politeia* is legitimized as *Paideia*.

If, however, the will of the ruler is the true wisdom, then, whoever opposes this, not only does wrong but, even more, falls into error. To be under the dominance of the state means then not only to subject the will, but also cognition to a social authority which assumes a religious character. The whole intransigence — so sharply delineated in the Platonic writings — of the primacy of practical over theoretical reason culminates in the dogma that virtue is knowledge; and this is the ultimate root of the close connection of noesis and ethics, of science and politics, running so characteristically and fatefully through the whole of the Platonic system.

#### 15. PLATO AS A POLITICIAN

MORE recent investigation of Plato has seriously destroyed the opinion that he was a theoretical philosopher, and that the goal of his philosophy was the founding of a strict science.<sup>1</sup> Today we know that Plato was, according to his nature, more of a politician than a theorist. Modern interpreters see in him more the educator and founder, than the thinker. Whether he really was this, whether he actually possessed the characteristics of a man of will, the abilities of a genius of action, is perhaps open to doubt. What is certain is, that his personal ideals lay in this direction, that he wanted to be what outwardly to be — for some reason or other — was denied to him. At any rate, he is not at all interested in a scientific explanation of empirical reality: his problem is the transcendental value, the ethico-political "ought" which points to volition, not to cognition. And since his ethico-political volition was everywhere based on metaphysical grounds and accordingly manifested itself literally in an outspoken religious ideology, he gives in his writings less the impression of being a learned systematist of moral science, than a prophet of the ideal State. He appears not so much as a psychologist or sociologist of social reality than as a preacher of justice.

If there is any document that affords data on the most personal intentions of Plato, then it is his autobiography, the so-

<sup>1</sup> E. Howald, *Die Platonische Akademie und die moderne universitas litterarum*, 1921, p. 15; E. Salin, *Platon und die griechische Utopie*, 1921, *passim*.

called VIIth Epistle, in which the old man in one of his most serious moments gives to himself and the world an account of his life. Here Plato expresses in a manner excluding every doubt, what he himself considered the aim of his life and what its accomplishment had been. The latter: *Paideia*:

"... to convert young men to what is good and just and thereby to bring them always into a state of mutual friendliness and comradeship."<sup>1</sup>

But the former: politics:

"In the days of my youth my experience was the same as that of many others. I thought that as soon as I should become my own master I would immediately enter into public life."

But a political revolution occurred, and democracy was set aside and the sovereignty assumed by the thirty tyrants. After these were overthrown, he again felt himself drawn to active politics:

"Then once again I was really, though less urgently, impelled with a desire to take part in public and political affairs."

But the actualities had made him sick of following his impulses.

"When, therefore, I considered all this, and the type of men who were administering the affairs of the State, with their laws, too, and their customs, the more I considered them and the more I advanced in years myself, the more difficult appeared to me the task of managing affairs of State rightly. For it was impossible to take action without friends and trusty companions; and these it was not easy to find ready to hand, since our State was no longer managed according to the principles and institutions of our forefathers; while to acquire other new friends with any facility was a thing impossible. Moreover, both the written laws and the customs were being corrupted, and that with surprising rapidity. Consequently, although at first I was filled with an ardent desire to engage in public affairs, when I considered all this and saw how things were shifting about anyhow in all directions, I finally became dizzy; and although I continued to consider by what means some betterment could be brought about not only in these matters but also in the government as a whole, yet as regards political action I kept constantly waiting for an opportune moment. . . . So in my praise of the right philosophy I was compelled to declare that by it one is enabled to discern all forms of justice both political and individual. Wherefore the classes of mankind (I said) will have no cessation from evil until either the class of those who

<sup>1</sup> Epistle VII, §28.

are right and true philosophers attains political supremacy, or else the class of those who hold power in the State becomes, by some compensation of Heaven, really philosophic."<sup>1</sup>

If we may believe anything at all of what Plato wrote then, we must believe that which he did not say via the mouth of another, i.e. from behind the mask of Socrates, but that which he said himself, as Plato: that he spent his entire life waiting for the right moment to act and pending this and because it did not come, he wrote, he cultivated philosophy.

But even if we did not have Plato's personal confession, his dialogues speak no less clearly for the primacy of his political intentions as against theoretical knowledge. This is already shown by the fact that the chief problem of his philosophy to which all other problems were subordinated, is the problem of justice; and this — psychologically — means that Plato's principal aim, his deepest desire, was to find a moral basis for action. If he showed anything with his Socrates-dialogues, it was, that what they sought cannot be attained by rational cognition, because this rational cognition is not able to solve the problem of justice, but — even against its intention — only to dissolve it; and that it is only an indestructible need in the willing and acting individual which necessarily raises the question of justice, thereby maintaining the belief in its existence. Only he who

"keeps constantly waiting for an opportune moment of political action"

and uses the period of waiting by trying to think out

"all forms of justice both political and individual,"

will give so much scope to writing about the state and justice in his literary life-work, as was done by Plato. His main work, the "Republic," is a dialogue which seeks to find out the essence of justice and thereby provides the constitution of an ideal state. This is not a system of political theory, it is political propaganda. And so, too, his most extensive and for the whole tendency of his thought no less conclusive book, the "Laws," has the same character; it is not in the least a theoretical study, but a political program.

<sup>1</sup> Epistle VII, 324C-326A.



# 16. THE TYRANNICAL CHARACTER AND THE FIGURE OF CALLICLES

FROM a number of singularities in the writings of Plato one can trace out that in the chord of this great life the fundamental tone is political ambition, and that Eros is at its root. First of all, there is the description of the tyrannical character in the IXth book of the "Republic," so many times cited by us and so full of consequences of all kinds.

It has been thought that in this caricature may be found a portrait of Dionysius of Syracuse. But this is hard to reconcile with the relation in which Plato actually stood with this ruler; and the institution as such, the absolute monarchy, Plato — as an opponent of democracy — surely did not want to deprecate. In this way, the strong affect which this condemnation of the tyrannical type aroused in Plato cannot be accounted for. There is no doubt that in principle he rejected dictatorship, yet he occasionally admitted that the true state can be established by force only, i.e., in a dictatorial manner. Indeed, in the constitution of his ideal state, he concentrated such a mass of power in the executive organ that this could only be a monarch; and this means under the actual conditions in Hellas, a dictator, a tyrant.<sup>1</sup> The resentment which is expressed here permits — as we have already shown — of the conclusion that a most highly personal element was dominant here. It reveals more than anything else that Plato felt himself called to royal leadership. It shows us what can be only the reverse side of such a royal self-consciousness: the strong aversion for the absolute counterpart of the just man of wisdom, for the tyrant; the hatred of the tyrant who was not yet a tyrant in the state, not outwardly so, who was a tyrant in his soul; and this soul which Plato had seen so frightfully clearly even unto its most remote lurking place, could have been nothing else but his own innermost being. The judgment on the tyrant that is pronounced here is the judgment which Plato held on himself. The "unrest and repentance" which is described as the state of the soul of the tyrant who is under the dominance of Eros, is the bad conscience springing from the tyrannical Eros, or the moral reaction against the "lustful and tyrannical desires" which Plato here brands as being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

farthest from reason,<sup>1</sup> and which yet form the deepest level of his own Ego. This bad conscience betrays itself sometimes in the harshness, bordering on cruelty, of the punishments proposed in the "Republic" and in particular in the "Laws." It is Plato's Ego-ideal which sets itself against his original inclinations with the demand that in his own inner being reason shall rule, exactly as in the state the philosopher should do. So Plato himself becomes the true "royal man and king over himself," and as such awaits the destined hour when he shall be called; so he feels at the height of his royal self-consciousness, in the depths of which nevertheless there slumbered a fear of this hour; an anxiety which betrayed itself in the opinion that the most unhappy man is he

"who is of a tyrannical nature, and, instead of leading a private life, has been cursed with the further misfortune of being a public tyrant."<sup>2</sup>

This fear, a fear of himself, it may well have been, which again drove him away from politics, to which he felt himself drawn by many threads. He compares the tyrannical character,

"who is ill-governed in his own person — the tyrannical man, I mean — whom you just now decided to be the most miserable of all," because he will "be yet more miserable when, instead of leading a private life, he is constrained by fortune to be a public tyrant"

to a man who, sickly, cannot master his own body and

"is compelled to pass his life, not in retirement, but fighting and combating with other men."<sup>3</sup>

But this retirement which seemed disgraceful to any proper Hellene, must have seemed doubly ignominious to Plato who was more Greek, in his political sentiments, than the Greeks. How often must he, to whom philosophizing on the state was merely a weak surrogate for governing the state, how often must he, the aristocrat, have been sick of this whole philosophy which could be a profession for *petits bourgeois* only; how stale he must have found it; how weary it must have made him; how unworthy of the social position of a man who — as Plato —

<sup>1</sup> Republic (587 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (578 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (579 St.)

counted Solon among his ancestors and who was so proud of his uncle Critias, who, to be sure, although a philosopher and poet, was above all else a statesman. In the involuntary leisure of his life which was so near to philosophy and so far, alas, from the state, Plato may have asked himself over again would it not be better to

"leave philosophy and go on to higher things. For philosophy, if pursued in moderation and at the proper age, is an elegant accomplishment, but too much philosophy is the ruin of human life. Even if a man has good parts, still, if he carries philosophy into later life, he is necessarily ignorant of all those things which a gentleman and a person of honour ought to know; he is inexperienced in the laws of the state, and in the language which ought to be used in the dealings of man with man; whether private or public, and utterly ignorant of the pleasures and desires of mankind and of human character in general. And people of this sort when they betake themselves to politics or business, are as ridiculous as the politicians, when they make their appearance in the arena of philosophy . . . Philosophy as part of education is an excellent thing, and there is no disgrace to a man while he is young in pursuing such a study; but when he is more advanced in years, the thing becomes ridiculous."<sup>1</sup>

Give up this resultless philosophizing:

"and refute no more. 'Learn the philosophy of business, and acquire the reputation of wisdom. But leave to others these niceties,' whether they are to be described as follies or absurdities. 'For they will only give you poverty for the inmate of your duelling.' Cease, then, emulating these paltry splitters of words, and emulate only the man of substance and honour, who is well to do."<sup>2</sup>

Shall it really be my destiny to

"creep into a corner for the rest of my life, and talk in a whisper with three or four admiring youths."<sup>3</sup>

These are all words which Plato puts into the mouth of Callicles in his dialogue "Gorgias."<sup>4</sup> Also in Callicles, in this perhaps most lifelike figure of his dialogues, Plato has sketched the picture of a tyrannical character, and here also he puts him in the wrong. In the dispute with Socrates he lets Callicles be beaten

<sup>1</sup> Gorgias (484/5 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Gorgias (486 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Gorgias (485 St.)

<sup>4</sup> I have only so far modified these passages quoted as was necessary to let some one speak of himself, while in the original, Callicles was speaking of another person, Socrates.

in the end. But he attributes a criticism of Socrates to him in this dispute which is remarkably correct. He lets Callicles say of Socrates:

"The truth is, Socrates, that you who pretend to be engaged in the pursuit of truth, are appealing now to the popular and vulgar notion of right, which is not natural, but only conventional. Convention (*νόμος*) and nature (*φύσις*) are generally at variance with one another; and hence, if a person is too modest to say what he thinks, he is compelled to contradict himself, and you, in your ingenuity, perceiving the advantage to be thereby gained, slyly ask of him, who is arguing conventionally a question which is to be determined by the rule of nature; and if he is talking of the rule of nature, you slip away to custom."<sup>1</sup>

Thus he uncovers so inconsiderately the dialectic "trick," with which Socrates carries on his "cunning ingenuity," so that it is difficult to recognize in it anything else than a hidden polemic of Plato's against the Socratic pettifoggery.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation imposes itself, especially when one notes the importance the "Gorgias" had for the spiritual development of Plato, who attained here — under the influence of his first trip to Sicily — to a completely new metaphysical-religious concept of the problem of justice, entirely different from the rationalistic method of Socrates. He presents it — for the first time — in the great myth at the end of the dialogue. That he also has this reported on by Socrates, although the answer here given to the question of what constitutes justice makes superfluous the whole empty paronomasia which Socrates had just carried through, is curious enough. But this is after all Plato's noble manner: he remains faithful to Socrates as personality, even when he drops his dogma, since, of course, it is not on account of any of his dogmas that Socrates is Plato's ideal.

If the guess is right that Plato has portrayed in the great opponent of Socrates, in Callicles, his brilliant uncle Critias, much admired by him, the man who played such a leading part

<sup>1</sup> Gorgias (483 St.). Lamb translates: "And this, look you, is the clever trick you have devised for our undoing in your discussions: when a man states anything according to convention, you slip 'according to nature' into your questions; and again, if he means nature, you imply convention."

<sup>2</sup> Friedlaender *op. cit.* I, p. 134, denies that "Plato anywhere carries on a hidden fight against Socrates"; but he adds: "it could be that Plato fights against the Socrates in him, against himself." Cf. also the pertinent literature cited by Friedlaender.

under the thirty tyrants,<sup>1</sup> then we understand why the speech in which Callicles advocates the right of great personalities to government sounds so convincing.<sup>2</sup> Thus, to become like Critias, was his wish, too, was, at least, a possibility which Plato felt in himself and wished to realize. But he fought against this drive for power in himself, and he externalized this part of his self in Critias-Callicles.

"How can a man be happy if he is a servant to anybody at all?"<sup>3</sup> he reports him as saying, and by these words Callicles has read Plato's inmost thoughts. But the urgency with which Plato struggled against the Callicles in himself may perhaps be seen from the fact that he made him the advocate of a most despised sophistic theory, the doctrine proclaiming the right of the stronger. And this doctrine is so caricatured in the account of it given by Callicles that Socrates is easily able to reduce it to absurdity. But at the same time Callicles who advocates an evidently absurd thesis is characterized clearly as an outstanding intelligence. Thus, this personality is split by a contradiction. Again, it is the contradiction in Plato's own breast. Hence, Plato has Callicles cite the "Antiope" of Euripides<sup>4</sup> which contains the famous logomachia between Amphiion and Zethos, in which the βίος θεωρητικός contends with the βίος πρακτικός. For this is the basic conflict in Plato's life: in quiet retirement to grapple with knowledge, or in the arena of political life for dominance; it is the contradiction between the lonely life of the scholar and the dramatic role of the statesman and reformer, between pessimistic flight from the world, and optimistic leadership over the world. At the climax of the dialogue "Gorgias," which is the Callicles scene, this conflict as well as the problem of justice confronted with its complete negation, the so-called right of the stronger, should come to a solution. As the conflict between justice and the right of the stronger is decided in favor of justice and against the right of the stronger, so the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Menzel, *Kallikles*, Wien 1922, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Gomperz, *op. cit.* II., p. 333: "We are astonished at the glamour which Plato casts over the young, half-tamed lion whom he here depicts breaking his bonds and arising in the might of his inborn majesty. We admire the artistic power with which he has delineated the, to him, ethically repellent character of the 'overman.' Can it be that, while repelled by the misuse of genius, he still felt the attraction of genius itself?"

<sup>3</sup> Gorgias (491 St.) Jewett translates: "who is the servant of anything."

<sup>4</sup> Gorgias (484 St.)

conflict between philosophy and politics is decided — still here in the “Gorgias” — in favor of philosophy against politics. This solution finds its symbolic expression in the final myth: Among the souls who stand before the judges of the dead, appear as wicked almost solely the souls of political leaders; as right appears he who

“may have been a private man or not; and I should say, Callicles,” says Socrates, “that he is most likely to have been a philosopher.”<sup>1</sup>

In this dialogue, Plato decided against the voice of his heart, which strove for political power, in favor of philosophical contemplation. But he allows it to be announced directly, in this dialogue, through the mouth of Socrates, that he is the only true politician:

“I think that I am the only or almost the only Athenian living who practises the true art of politics; I am the only politician of my time.”<sup>2</sup>

Only in the light of the VIIth Epistle can the “Gorgias” be fully understood.

#### 17. PLATO'S CLAIM TO DOMINANCE IN THE REPUBLIC

FROM this point of view we can find the deeper significance and personal meaning of many references in the “Republic.” So for instance in the VIth book, where Plato speaks of why the true philosopher, although called to the leadership of states, nevertheless, under the given unpleasant circumstances and also being too proud to beg from the crowd to be entrusted with the leadership, must refrain from it.<sup>3</sup> We feel that he speaks of himself when making reference to

“some lofty soul born in a mean city, the politics of which he condemns and neglects.”

And we hear the words of the great confession in the VIIth Epistle when we read how the true philosophers in sweet and blessed possession of wisdom renounce political activity, since

<sup>1</sup> Gorgias (526 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Gorgias (521 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (489 St.). Cf. also Ritter: *Die Dialoge Platons*, II, p. 77.



"they have also seen enough of the madness of the multitude; and they know that no politician is honest, nor is there any champion of justice at whose side they may fight and be saved";

and how the wise retreat from politics into philosophy as if "retiring under the shelter of a wall" from a "storm of dust and sleet" content, if only he, no matter how, "can live his own life and be pure from evil or unrighteousness, and depart in peace and good-will, with bright hopes." Does this mean only personal salvation and no realization of justice in the state?

"But is it yet something important that has been attained when he thus takes his departure?"

Plato lets it be asked here, as if it were a question he had asked himself many hundreds of times. Yet the answer runs:

"A great work — yes; but not the greatest, unless he find a State suitable to him; for in a State which is suitable to him, he will have a larger growth and be the saviour of his country, as well as of himself."<sup>1</sup>

Such is the solution, towards which — quite otherwise than the "Gorgias" — the "Republic" strives. Not as a poet, or, as we would say, as a scholar, does Plato show up here. Again and again he wants it to appear that he is a "founder of the State," a "legislator."<sup>2</sup> At least, he will construct a state "in idea,"<sup>3</sup> since it is not possible in actuality. The feeling of bitter resignation speaks out of the words which could stand like a motto over his last work, the "Laws," and which he puts in the mouth of the Athenian speaking to the two older men in this dialogue, when they set to work to draw up the details of the laws for the community to be founded:

"Let us try to amuse ourselves, old boys as we are, by moulding in words the laws which are suitable to your state."<sup>4</sup>

Like boys who play at making laws without being lawmakers in reality, and so he compares this whole business of lawgiving in the "Laws" ironically with a game of draughts, where move follows move.<sup>5</sup> And yet Plato as a greybeard still has not yet lost

<sup>1</sup> Republic (496-497 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Republic (519 St.; 592 St.)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (369 St.; 473 St.; 592 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Laws (712 St.)

<sup>5</sup> Laws (739 St.)

the hope of active political life. In his awareness of the distance between the ideal state of the "Republic" and the propositions which he made in the "Laws," he now says that the former is appropriate only to the "Gods or sons of Gods," but that the "State which we have now in hand, when created, will be nearest to immortality and the only one which takes the second place." And he mysteriously adds "and after that, by the grace of God, we will complete the third one."<sup>1</sup> In the last chapter — more over the last which Plato ever wrote — the longing for political activity and the conviction of having been called to it by God speaks out with elemental vigor: "Of these matters," says the Athenian behind whom is hidden Plato himself,

"I have had much experience, and have often considered them, and I daresay that I shall be able to find others who will also help."

And Cleinias answers:

"I agree, Stranger, that we should proceed along the road in which God is guiding us."

And shortly thereafter Plato reports Megillus, the second of the two old men with whom the Athenian converses about the foundation of the State, as declaring:

"Dear Cleinias, after all that has been said, either we must detain the Stranger, and by supplications and in all manner of ways make him share in the foundation of the city, or we must give up the undertaking."

To which Cleinias answers:

"Very true, Megillus; and you must join with me in detaining him."<sup>2</sup>

Plato had waited for this invitation his whole life. Only after his death — with the posthumous publication of the "Laws" — these words got to the ears of a world which had always been deaf to his cry for power.

Not so plainly and straightforward as the already impatient old man, who saw no more time before him to wait, the man standing at the height of his creative abilities, the Plato of the "Republic," had disclosed the longings of his soul; yet clearly

<sup>1</sup> Laws (739 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Laws (968/9 St.)

enough for those who will listen. The gigantic plan of an ideal state is indeed only an offer from this great passionate heart to serve his fatherland; but, of course, to serve it as a ruler. For if Plato repeatedly hinted that in the true state the philosopher rules, that necessarily "political greatness and wisdom meet in one,"<sup>1</sup> then it is only his own philosophy which he had in mind, and none other. The philosophers who ought to be the rulers in the ideal state would be trained exclusively in the Platonic philosophy. The aim of their education was to be the knowledge of the idea of the Good, which is possible only through the Platonic doctrine of ideas. Plato develops this doctrine, the nucleus of his whole philosophy, just on this point of the "Republic" where he describes the process of training the selected few who are called on to rule.<sup>2</sup> The inculcation of the Platonic philosophy is the chief task of the Platonic state. The philosophers who rule in the ideal state could be only Platonic philosophers; in them is dominant the spirit of Plato who rules through them and thus satisfies — in spirit — his wish for power.

When Plato set about establishing his claim to the rulership of philosophers, he had first to struggle against the general opinion, which must have been more painful to him than to any other philosopher: that philosophers were impractical people and incapable in politics. And after he had shown

"that the harsh feeling which the many entertain towards philosophy originates in the pretenders, who rush in uninvited,"<sup>3</sup>

so that the usual reproach cannot hold for the true philosopher, he sought to characterize the latter in a preliminary fashion. He would be one

"whose mind is fixed upon true being" . . . "his eye is ever directed towards things fixed and immutable, which he sees neither injuring nor injured by one another, but all in order moving according to reason; these he imitates."<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious the true reasonable existence of the eternal immutable idea, the idea of the Good above all, the knowledge of which makes the true philosopher who is called to rule. It is

<sup>1</sup> Republic (473 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (503 St. sq.)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (500 St.)

<sup>4</sup> Republic (500 St.)

his doctrine of ideas, which Plato here explains as the philosophy which must become the ruling goddess in the state. The true philosopher will now do everything to imitate the true essence observed by him, "and to these he will, as far as he can, conform himself."

"And if a necessity be laid upon him of fashioning, not only himself, but human nature generally, whether in States or individuals, into that which he beholds elsewhere," then he must be a skilful "artificer of justice, temperance and every civil virtue."<sup>1</sup>

And now Plato gives the talk a wholly, unmotivated turn, a turn which unmistakably expresses his belief in himself as the true philosopher, to whom alone is due the conduct of the state. He has Socrates say:

"And if the world perceives that what we (Socrates and the other participants in the talk) are saying about him (the true philosopher) is the truth, will they be angry with philosophy? Will they disbelieve us, when we tell them that *no State can be happy which is not designed by artists who imitate the heavenly pattern?*"<sup>2</sup>

Now as the essential condition that the State should be happy is explained not only that it shall be ruled by a true philosopher, but also that a true philosopher shall have drafted its constitution. And to the question of Adeimantus as to "how will they draw out the plan of which you are speaking?"

"They (the philosophers) will begin by taking the State and the manners of men, from which, as from a tablet, they will rub out the picture, and leave a clean surface. This is no easy task. But whether easy or not, herein will lie the difference between them and every other legislator — they will have nothing to do either with individual or State, and will inscribe no laws, until they have either found, or themselves made, a clean surface."<sup>3</sup>

And accordingly they will before everything "trace an outline of the constitution." This is again Plato himself, who will not concern himself with politics before the State has been "cleaned"; for this is just what Plato — the painter who "imitates the heavenly pattern" — had undertaken to do with his "Republic." He "traced an outline of the constitution" on the basis of an insight into the relationship of the individual and the State. And

<sup>1</sup> Republic (500 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (500 St.) (My italics)

<sup>3</sup> Republic (501 St.)

he could have meant no one but himself when he let Socrates come to the conclusion: May we now hope to persuade the people

"that the painter of constitutions is such an one as we were praising; at whom they were so very indignant because to his hands we committed the State; and are they growing a little calmer at what they have just heard?"<sup>1</sup>

That Plato presupposes as self-evident the philosophy which must dominate in the ideal state to be only his own, and hence himself as the proper founder and leader, is shown also by the fact that a series of apparent inconsistencies can be resolved only by this presupposition. Thus, remarking that the true state alone guarantees the education of true philosophers, he again explains that the true state would only be possible if the true philosopher came to reign.<sup>2</sup> For Plato, this was not a fallacy of the vicious circle, because the "true philosophy" was his own philosophy which originated prior to the true state, and outside the range of its influence, because to Plato the birth of the doctrine of ideas in the evil state was his most personal experience.

The basic difficulty of the Platonic — like every other — ideal state is the following: how is it possible that it shall arise out of the evil state of the present, how can the best, the true philosopher, come into power, by what way may the first good government come into being? And, once this first step has already come about as if by a miracle: how is it possible to guarantee that the best, the true, philosopher remains always in power and that he never will lose it? All these difficulties Plato seems not to have seen. For of the basic requirement for the realization and maintenance of the ideal state, i.e., of the existence of the best, the true philosopher, Plato is as certain as anybody can be of himself only. Particularly significant in this regard is the manner and way in which Plato treats the question of the realization of his ideal state. It is not a question which especially concerns him. As an example of the almost playful levity with which he grazes rather than seriously considers it: at the end of the VIIth book, Socrates emphasizes:

"you would agree (would you not?) that what has been said about

<sup>1</sup> Republic (501 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. as to this Raeder: Platons philosophische Entwicklung, 2. Aufl. p. 222.

the State and the government is not a mere dream, and although difficult not impossible, but only possible in the way which has been supposed; that is to say, when the true philosopher kings are born in a State, *one* or more of them,"<sup>1</sup>

And to the question rather occasionally put by Glaucon, as to how the real philosophers will proceed to bring about their State, Socrates answers:

"They will begin by sending out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who are more than ten years old, and will take possession of their children, who will be unaffected by the habits of their parents; these they will train in their own habits and laws, I mean in the laws which we have given them; and in this way the State and constitution of which we were speaking will soonest and most easily attain happiness, and the nation which has such a constitution will gain most."<sup>2</sup>

That is all. Whether the setting aside of the adults is just the quickest and easiest method of bringing into being the ideal State, could reasonably be doubted, if it had to be assumed that Plato was really seriously intent on a realization. But Glaucon agrees with Socrates, that he has correctly described the manner of realization "how, if ever, such a constitution might come into being." If the ideal State should come into being, then no one else but Plato and his followers would be able to form the first government; and then its first subjects were — children, its first government — a board of education. This is clearly the idea — unexpressed although it is — standing behind Plato's phantasy of the State. But how to provide for regeneration of the government? As is well known, Plato divided the population of his State into two classes: the mass of tradesmen and laborers on the one hand, and a much smaller group of "guardians," as the soldiers were called, on the other. From this warrior class should arise, by way of a careful selection, the proper philosophically trained rulers, to whom was given an almost unrestricted power. It is clear that from the standpoint of real politics, everything came from this selection and above all depended upon who did the selecting. But just as to this, Plato is evasive. After Socrates has declared that the rulers shall be those "who have most the character of guardians," he says:

<sup>1</sup> Republic (540 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (541 St.)



"There must be a selection. Let us note among the guardians those who in their whole life show the greatest eagerness to do what is for the good of their country, and the greatest repugnance to do what is against her interests."<sup>1</sup>

After Glaucon has agreed "those are the right men":

"And they will have to be watched at every age, in order that we may see whether they preserve their resolution . . ."

"There must be a selection," "they will have to be watched" — but who is the one who has to select, who is to watch? Who is this anonymous person playing so great, so decisive a role in all plans for world betterment; and behind whom is he always hidden, from whose heart and mind has sprung the plan for world betterment? It is his careful watch on which depends the fate of the State. Socrates betrays it again when he says let "us" note . . . and "we" may see . . . "Us" and "we": that is Plato and his followers.

The government of the ideal State is in the possession of the perfect wisdom. The ruler, and he alone moreover, is in the possession of justice which determines his actions. But cannot he, too, err? Is it entirely excluded that the highest ruler — and in terms of Plato's thought it must be assumed that there is only one supreme ruler, a monarch — shall not lose his divine gift? Must not the constitution provide for this contingency? But just this is not possible in the Platonic constitution. Since only the king is in possession of the highest wisdom, none but he can pass judgment on whether a sovereign act departs from the line of greatest justice. It is surely always the same vicious circle, this vicious circle of the absolute, from which only he who believes to be in possession of it and only he for himself, can find the egress. Plato did in fact reckon with the possibility that the ruler of his ideal State might sometime err; and that in this way the ideal State might degenerate. He admits:

"A city which is thus constituted can hardly be shaken; but, seeing that everything which has a beginning has also an end, even a constitution such as yours will not last for ever, but will in time be dissolved."<sup>2</sup>

The danger of downfall, however, only occurs when the sovereign does not take care of the requisite reproduction in the

<sup>1</sup> Republic (412 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (546 St.)

master class, when an error is committed in the selection of the pairs fit for procreation. This is the case when the ruler does not know the mystic number controlling fruitful pairing, the Platonic nuptial number. But how could this formula remain hidden to him, since Plato himself here describes it in the VIIth book of the "Republic"? Of course, he can only seriously imagine himself as king of the Ideal State, for he, and he alone, knows the mystic number. But since he is not yet the king, but in reality only a writer, there remains to him nothing else to do than to make his secret known. In doing so, nevertheless, he takes revenge on the cruel reality for he speaks of the lucky number only in so obscure a language that in the end the secret still remains his, the key to the kingdom in his exclusive possession, and therefore he alone the true king.

The government of the ideal State might properly, so Plato tells us, avail itself for definite ends of certain "needful falsehoods." It will not, of course, itself be lied to by the subjects, under any circumstances. But there are lies which Plato considers necessary, in which not only the subjects but also the rulers have to believe: Socrates asks:

"How then may we devise one of those needful falsehoods of which we lately spoke — just one royal lie which may deceive the rulers, if that be possible, and at any rate the rest of the city?"<sup>1</sup>

The question customary elsewhere: *quis custodiet custodes?*, here becomes — significantly enough — the question: who deceives the liars? Well, Plato himself! He, again only a writer, can do nothing but leave it to Socrates to reveal this lie here, at the behest of Glaucon<sup>2</sup>; and does not notice that hereby he balks

<sup>1</sup> Republic (414 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Republic (415 St.). The "lie" which the rulers themselves shall be made to believe, if possible, is the fable of the *Σωπτοί* which Plato has reinterpreted for his own ends. The *Σωπτοί* were the warriors that sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus. The belief in the truth of this tale would bring about the idea that the citizens sprang from the land, like children out of their mother's womb. "Their country being their mother and also their nurse, they are bound to advise for her good, and to defend her against attacks, and her citizens they are to regard as children of the earth and their own brothers." Especially significant is the addition which Plato makes to the fable: "Citizens, we shall say to them in our tale, you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently. Some of you have the power of command, and in the composition of these he has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honour; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries; others again who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron; and the species will generally be preserved in the

his own aim, i.e., makes it impossible that the government of his ideal State shall be deceived. For it can no longer — knowing Plato's "Republic" — be deceived. But in his imagination Plato himself is the supreme ruler, who stands yet higher, above the government of the ideal State, and who lies even to this government, he, the unique one who cannot be lied to.

18. PLATO'S CLAIM TO DOMINANCE IN THE "STATESMAN"  
AND IN THE "LAWS"

PLATO is himself the "kingly master," whose ideal picture he sets up in the dialogue "Statesman," he is this statesman guided by reason only. Because of this, he who in reality was only a philosopher, must present the paradoxical thesis: royal power is a science.<sup>1</sup> Whoever can justify this claim to rulership by the sole fact of being a philosopher, must identify rulership with science; as he identified virtue with knowledge. He must be persuaded that he who has the right knowledge is already the proper ruler, irrespective of whether or not he has the outward position of a king:

"For kings we may truly call those who possess royal science, whether they rule or not, as was shown in the previous argument;"<sup>2</sup>

just as Plato has called the character dominated by the tyrannical Eros, i.e. himself, his second evil Ego, a tyrant, even when he was not forced by fate "to become a tyrant."

Here in the "Statesman" Plato presents — much more clearly than in the "Republic" — the view that the truly wise, royal

children. But as all are of the same original stock, a golden parent will sometimes have a silver son, or a silver parent a golden son. And God proclaims as a first principle to the rulers, and above all else, that there is nothing which they should so anxiously guard, or of which they are to be such good guardians, as of the purity of the race. They should observe what elements mingle in their offspring; for if the son of a golden or silver parent has an admixture of brass and iron, then nature orders a transposition of ranks, and the eye of the ruler must not be pitiful towards the child because he has to descend in the scale and become a husbandman or artisan, just as there may be sons of artisans who, having an admixture of gold or silver in them, are raised to honour, and become guardians or auxiliaries. For an oracle says that when a man of brass or iron guards the State, it will be destroyed." That is the "needful falsehood" which Plato would, if possible, cause even the ruler to believe: that the citizens were of course all alike because they sprang from the same mother Earth, but nevertheless — since there must be rulers and ruled — that they were, too, different by their very nature.

<sup>1</sup> Statesman (292 St.) ; see also (260 St.)

<sup>2</sup> Statesman (292 St.)

sovereign is at best not restricted by any kind of constitutional laws, but rules only according to free judgment guided by reason.<sup>1</sup> And in the "Laws," too, he says:

"If a man were born so divinely gifted that he could naturally apprehend the truth, he would have no need of laws to rule over him; for there is no law or order which is above knowledge, nor can mind, without impiety, be deemed the subject or slave of any man, but rather the lord of all."<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, here in the "Laws" he is pessimistic in his belief in human nature; he supposes that there are none or only a very few men who partake in a reasonable insight, and that it is preferable to have the state ruled by laws. But in the ideal State of the "Republic" he presupposes that the sovereignty is in the hands of men who possess the highest wisdom.

According to Plato's conception the ideal State is just that one in which the wise rule. Therefore, Plato could have contented himself in his description of it, with the personal question, so to speak; at most with the hint that the best man who, somehow, came to power, has to govern according to his free discretion, by nothing else but his individual decision applied only to concrete cases. But Plato, with an obvious inconsistency, restricts the free discretion of the future king by a great number of general directions as to the management of the ideal State developed in the "Republic"; and he does not feel the contradiction involved therein. It is the contradiction between his basic postulate of a completely free discretion of the ruler, restricted by no laws, and the whole of the rest of his "Republic." And Plato does not feel this contradiction because he has taken himself as the highest lawgiver who, however, has not perceived as "laws" the provisions concerning the ideal State originated in his political phantasies; these provisions can naturally be nothing else but general norms binding the future ruler of the ideal State, even if they are not put in legal force. Plato, the philosopher, could not otherwise express his political will, nor make it effective, than through such "Platonic" laws.

More than his philosophical cognition, his political will was for him the bridge from I to Thou. Not so much as a subject of

<sup>1</sup> Statesman (293 sqq. St.)

<sup>2</sup> Laws (875 St.)

an understanding science, rather much more as an object to be mastered, had he seen mankind, especially the masses. In the "Laws" a comparison occurs in two places, which is significant in this — as well as many others — directions in that it displays Plato's position with respect to God and Man. Man, he says here, is at bottom nothing more than a "puppet of the Gods";<sup>1</sup> whether more than a "plaything," he does not know. But *we* do see clearly that, as God plays with his will-less puppets, as he may pull them by their invisible strings, so also the godlike philosopher and ruler, filled with divine wisdom, who uniquely and alone possesses the knowledge of justice, the kingly man may and should guide — according to the notion expressed implicitly rather than openly by Plato — the men subject to him and bound to unconditional obedience. These are, for Plato, only material for his pedagogic and political impulses. For anything like freedom of the personality as for a principle valid for everyone, he lacked all feeling. That in his "Republic" Plato treated men like slaves, cannot be justified by the fact that he believes the galleys to which they were fettered to be the ideal State. It is precisely on this point that there is no difference between the "Laws" and the "Republic." In the "second-best" State the content of the legal order is of course somewhat different, but its pressure, the intensity of the government, is equally great. This hypertrophy of the State's will, this excess of authority flowing from an exaggerated feeling of political infallibility, this pitiless suppression of every opposition shows up in the work of Plato's old age in a rather unpleasant way. What is so repellent is not only the cruelty of the punishments here prescribed, but the unexampled intellectual terrorism, especially in the field of religion. Here we see clearly the tyrannical character ruling, the character whom Plato had always felt as the devil in his own heart.

#### 19. THE SYRACUSEAN ADVENTURE

It is not merely Plato's work which shows us his political ambition, it is also his life. It stands in the shadow of a political undertaking, the beginning of which falls in the period when

<sup>1</sup> Laws (644 St.). Cf. also (804 St.)

Plato, at the age of forty, made his first voyage to Sicily. This adventure which disturbed him almost until the time of his death, and cast a gloom over his declining years was the attempt Plato made to win to his ideas the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius the Younger; an attempt by which the Platonic Academy, or at least some of its most prominent members, were drawn into a bloody civil war, in the course of which was wrecked the great Sicilian kingdom, founded by Dionysius the Elder, one of the most vigorous commonwealths which the Hellenic world had brought into being, and perhaps its last powerful position at all in Antiquity. In this series of events, the name of the Platonic Academy was not covered with honor.

After the death of Socrates and a transitory residence in Megara, Plato had gone on an extended voyage which may have been caused more by political than by scientific interests. This trip probably took him to Egypt and certainly to the southern part of Italy, where he came into intimate contact with the religious-political organization of the Pythagoreans, in particular with their most outstanding leader, Archytas of Tarentum. The antidemocratic, outspokenly aristocratic tendencies of the Pythagoreans corresponded completely with the political views which had brought Plato in opposition to his home city, at the time of the restoration of democracy. He may also have been attracted by the mystical elements in the Pythagorean doctrine. From Southern Italy he went to Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, and residence of the tyrant Dionysius, probably induced to do so by the Pythagoreans who had political connections there. In Syracuse he became acquainted with Dion, a young relative of the tyrant's, and fell passionately in love with him. There is preserved a poem of Plato written when he was more than seventy years old, a poem on the death of his paramour, and which contains the significant line:

"Dion who moved my heart to such agonizing love."

Dion it was who brought Plato to the court of Dionysius. And in the love of the beautiful youth Plato "begot" — to use the language of the "Symposium" — the thought, so fateful for him, of realizing in Syracuse his political ideal. He intended to make a royal master of the tyrant. But the latter did not let Plato



carry out his idea, and rather brutally tried to get rid of the philosopher who had become irksome to him. It is even reported that he had made him be sold into slavery at Aegina, a slavery from which the philosopher only became freed by the hazard of being redeemed in the market by a certain Anniceris of Cyrene.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this failure, Plato accepted an invitation to Syracuse sent him after the death of Dionysius I by his son and successor Dionysius II. It was Dion who caused Dionysius, his brother-in-law, to invite the philosopher. When Plato made his second trip to Syracuse, he was already sixty years of age. And this time, too, disappointment did not fail to occur. Between the young ruler and his brother-in-law, Dion, a quarrel arose out of the latter's intention (real or perhaps only suspected by Dionysius) to seize the reign for himself. Scarcely three months after Plato's arrival, his young friend had been banished; and with this, Plato's dream came to an end. His intention seems to have been to induce Dionysius to introduce a sort of constitutional monarchy and to restore the Greek cities which his father had partly destroyed, partly colonized with retired mercenaries, i.e., barbarians. Plato may have had instructions to work out a constitution for the communities which were to be reestablished.<sup>2</sup> But this work did not come to any tangible results and Plato evidently did not succeed in gaining influence upon the tyrant. He himself explained this most emphatically in his IIIrd Epistle. He returned to Athens without having achieved any political success. Dion, too, had gone to Athens, and lived there in close friendship with Plato and his followers of the Academic circle. Nevertheless, relations between Plato and Dionysius, too, were maintained, although only superficially. The philosopher carried out small commissions for the tyrant. Based on certain remarks in Plato's XIIIth Epistle, Eduard Meyer believes it may be assumed that "Dionysius placed sums at his disposal for the payment of taxes and other expenses and made use of him as a reliable man in the affair with Dion and in other diplomatic transactions."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eduard Meyer: *Geschichte des Altertums*, 1921, V, p. 502. The report in any case is very much doubted.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Meyer *op. cit.*, p. 504.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Meyer *op. cit.*, p. 506.

Although Plato did not succeed in getting Dionysius to lift the decree of banishment against Dion and having his confiscated property returned to him, he accepted another invitation to Syracuse — an almost incomprehensible step! In issuing such an invitation, Dionysius was obviously aiming at no other purpose than to gain, in the person of the famous philosopher and most intimate friend of the feared Dion, a hostage, so that Dion would refrain from any undertakings against his brother-in-law. When Plato had, as he confesses, after long hesitation decided to take this step, in order to make a final attempt to win Dionysius over to a reconciliation with Dion, and at the same time to gain his adherence to the true philosophy,<sup>1</sup> shows a more than ordinary naiveté on the part of the great philosopher. If we are allowed to consider as genuine Plato's so-called IIIrd Epistle, then we get an almost stirring picture: on the one side a young tyrant who has grown up in the midst of blood and violence, standing with both feet on the ground of reality and merciless life, clinging to this life which was filled with pleasures of all sort; and on the other hand the aged philosopher living solely in a pure spiritual sphere, who would have wished to transform the young voluptuary according to a doctrinary plan of education, into a noble and wise king; and who — being conscious of the vast responsibility, felt obliged to proceed meticulously, beginning with the training in geometry. This brought down upon him in the hour of departure, which Plato describes in his IIIrd Epistle, not only the scorn of Dionysius, but also the latter's hypocritical reproach that the philosopher had hindered the tyrant in the recolonization of the destroyed Hellenic cities. Only with great effort did the sixty-six-year-old Plato escape from the tyrant's hospitality, which was nothing but a scantily dressed-up imprisonment. For all that, "they parted with the external appearance of friendship."<sup>2</sup> After Plato's return to Athens, Dion openly hastened his preparations for an attack on Dionysius the Younger. Plato reports in his VIIth Epistle:

"When I heard this, bade him summon my friends to his aid, should they be willing."

<sup>1</sup> VIIth Epistle, 339-345 c.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Meyer *op. cit.*, p. 509.

As for himself, however, he said to Dion he could do nothing against his former host.

"Thus, not only am I no longer, as I may say, of an age to assist anyone in war, but I also have ties in common with you both . . . so long as you desire to do evil summon others; this I said because I loathed my Sicilian wandering and its ill-success."<sup>1</sup>

This attitude of Plato's who had not formally broken with Dionysius and who for a considerable time had received material aid from him, is curious enough; and it has brought down on him reproach from Dionysius, not quite without foundation.<sup>2</sup> And thus arose the revolt in Syracuse led by Dion, and, since Plato did not try to hinder it, with the open support of prominent members of his Academy, in particular of Speusippus, Plato's nephew and successor in the direction of the school. It was almost a field expedition of the Academy itself. It came to an end when Dion, who was successful in driving out Dionysius and forcing his way to the leadership, was murdered by a friend, the Athenian Callippus. The murderer was perhaps not a member of the inner circle of the Academy, but he certainly, as a pupil of Plato's, belonged to the outer group.<sup>3</sup> Callippus after a brief moment as a leader experienced from the hand of a companion the same fate he had prepared for Dion.

Modern historical writers<sup>4</sup> are inclined to concede only ideal purposes to Dion's attempt against Dionysius the Younger. They

<sup>1</sup> Epistle VII, 350 c sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ed. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 511. Plato's relation to Syracuse which was hostile to his home city is openly condemned even by those who unconditionally admire the philosopher. So Steinhart (*Platons Leben* p. 248), writes "that Plato, without having experienced any personal ill-will, not only completely refrained from supporting the Athenian City Republic but even devoted his best efforts to a foreign State. In this, which only shortly before had opposed his own country, and which was dominated by a tyrant and driven asunder by savage parties, Plato had endeavored to lay the basis for his ideal new construction. But setting aside the question whether Plato's ideal could be realized, and whether it was at all compatible with human nature, at Syracuse in any case all moral conditions of such a new construction were lacking and could not be replaced, neither by an authoritative order of a tyrant nor by the influence of Pythagorean secret societies. We are not in a position to reject unconditionally Niebuhr's harsh word: that Plato was a bad citizen."

<sup>3</sup> Athenaeus XI, 508: "So also Callippus of Athens, another disciple of Plato, though he had been a friend and fellow-pupil of Dion, and had traveled in his company to Syracuse, presently observing that Dion was trying to appropriate the monarchy to himself, killed him and attempted to be tyrant himself, but was murdered."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ed. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 512.

do this more out of respect for Plato's judgment than on the basis of the objective facts which would make Dion appear as the typical tyrant. He had his rival Heraclides assassinated, and in the further course of his rulership did not refrain from executions and confiscations of property. Even Ed. Meyer who in general judges Dion with very much tolerance, is obliged to admit: "The ideal king is outwardly indistinguishable from the despicable tyrant."<sup>1</sup> In view of the historic facts, however, it becomes difficult to accept uncritically Plato's defense of Dion in the VIIth Epistle — and this Epistle in its final section is nothing but a defense for his beloved friend. It is in direct contradiction with the facts when Plato asserts, with reference to Dion that who is master of himself will only strive for a position of power in such a way that he aims

"at a moderate government and establishment of the justest and best of laws," "by means of the fewest possible exiles and executions. Yet when Dion was now pursuing this course, resolved to suffer rather than to do unholy deeds . . ."

But Plato is obliged — in order not to come into too great an opposition to the facts in presenting the political action of Dion as the realization of his moral ideals — to add quite softly:

"although guarding himself against so suffering . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Plato is no unbiased judge of his beloved, who had ensnared him, the philosopher, estranged from the world who in spite of all love of power was naive and helpless in the presence of real power, into an adventure which sounds like a tragic quixotry. In Dion, Eros became also Plato's external fate.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 522.

<sup>2</sup> Epistle VII, 351 c-e.

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## *A Note on Conchology*

BY

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WHEN Freud turned the spotlight of his discoveries on psychology and behavior he not only illuminated those fields directly but he also threw a good deal of light on adjacent regions. In fact there are few fields of thought or action today that are not receiving some light from Freud's discoveries, even if only by reflection. This light Freud has shed is of definite value in the investigation of ideas and acts. It provides direction in attempts to find the answer to many questions. If it does not lead to a full answer or the solution to a problem, it does offer clues and has led to some shrewd guesses about conscious and unconscious patterns. It has revealed new meanings in certain wishes and yearnings in man's nature and it has brought us to some new explanations of his oddities.

Why do I enjoy shells, for example? From the psychological point of view a lot could be said. If collecting is akin to hoarding and hoarding is akin to so-called anal preoccupations, then shell collecting may be considered as an anal pattern, with compulsive elements in it, of course.

But when people ask questions like that, the answers are usually casual and superficial. This has to be the case because the questions are reflexly or rhetorically put. Ordinarily people ask me, "Why do you study conchology? What use is it to you?" To the second question there is but one answer — "It is of no use." The first question I can answer just as briefly, "Because I enjoy it."

In this paper, however, I shall make an effort to answer adequately, if not elaborately, the question, "Why do you like shells?" It will not be possible to pursue every associational thread to its ultimate end, nor advisable to lay open the extensive depths of thought and feeling to which the pursuit of associations would lead one, if allowed to run on endlessly. But at least I can go as far as time and space permit in a paper like this and you may read *my* statement as to why *I* like shells.

As a point of departure, I am a psychiatrist and my work schedule is heavy. Accordingly, relaxation is one of the im-

portant needs of my life. I am interested in the problem of relaxation and recreation for men in general because I realize that often this problem is not solved satisfactorily. In fact, I think that balancing work and play constitutes one of the major problems in life.

Physicians especially have to rest and play. The form of relaxation a man chooses is an index to part of his character. Darwin was a perpetual collector and hobbyist. Freud enjoyed card playing and did it regularly with his friends for relaxation all his life. Anatole France who said, "*Les Savants ne sont pas curieux*" (Scientists aren't different from anybody else) raised cats and loved to play with them; and so did Cardinal Richelieu, by the way.

But my being a physician and a psychiatrist does not explain why my own relaxation is best found among shells (I shall say that before anyone else does). It goes farther back than that. I was not always a physician or a psychiatrist and I enjoyed shells long before I was either. Therefore, let us go down to the roots of some of them and let us get back to my first impressions and earliest recollections of shells. What are they?

I recall once when my father was sick, he went to Florida. After he had been away for a while, he sent me back a present. It was a box of shells he had collected on the beach. His search for health had led him to the Gulf of Mexico. Convalescing there on the shore after pneumonia, I think it was, he occupied himself by collecting shells. Their beauty attracted him, for he was a poet — their beauty and their strangeness. Florida was not so well known in those days. Few people travelled there and its products were marvelled at when they reached other states: plants, flowers and fruits, game and fish and shells. Florida was the wonderland that contained, even then, the Fountain of Youth. We could see it bubbling and hear the water fall. We could almost taste it, the Pierian Spring, when Father came home in winter and with a poet's words told us about the warm sun, the golden sand, the lapis-lazuli ocean and the foamy, tumbling surf, the birds, flowers, game fish, the sailing and the shells. Sick people went there and found health. There was a therapeutic magic about it. And furthermore travellers brought back rare, strange, wonderful things: bright colored feathers, coconuts carved and painted to look like Indian heads, pony

hides decorated with beads; the rattlers from a rattlesnake, dried sea horses, spine fish and logger head turtles; primitive pottery, guava jelly and orange marmalade. While there my father even met a Seminole chief and photographed him!

All these things he told us about. Some gifts he had bought and shipped to others, cousins and aunts, relatives and friends, but I got shells and I was very happy to be remembered in that way. They suited me.

I recall the box, a large cedar box, in which they came and I recall the way it looked and smelled, spicy and alluring, and I can see it now in my mind's eye like a treasure chest full of treasures. It was kept on a shelf and was lifted down for me to play with on special occasions as a reward after I had put away my toys or had been a good boy in the various ways that Mother or nurse demanded, in the tight discipline of the nursery.

My shells were admired by everyone who saw them, my mother first of all and they were also shown off to friends and visitors.

"Lawsy chile, that one there sure do look like a snake gone wrong," said Liza, the cook, pointing to a *Vermicularis*, or worm shell. "An' that one there look like a terrapin's head," she added, pointing to a small cowrie. "An' that one look like a white baby scorpion," Liza continued, pointing a black and greasy finger at a lace murex.

Everyone marvelled at them naturally and spontaneously. Everyone liked some better than others. Visitors admired my shells. The contents of my shell box were prized and yearned over by my jealous playmates. Their fathers had not been sick and had not gone to Florida and had not returned healthy from the Caribbean with gifts; no, their fathers were ordinary. My father was extraordinary, and charming, and Mother was also.

There were enough duplicates for me to give some cherished ones away to members of the family who asked for them, though I kept the best for myself. This gave me some small philanthropic importance in the family circle and also gave me a sense of power and generosity. I fantasied going to Florida myself and collecting more shells to keep and to give away. Years later I did just that, as it came to pass.

That must have been about 1908 or 1909 and I was five or six years old at that time.

But apart from all these circumstances the shells themselves meant something to me. I did not realize it then but looking back I can see it plainly now. First the enjoyment of the shells was in itself a perfectly proper pleasure. They were sanctioned and approved. It was all right to play with them. Mother said I could. She even went so far as to take them down and give them to me. Father had sent them. They were his originally, now mine, and were admired by all and envied by some. That in itself was important. Second, they were a fine sight to see. There was the visual delight. I had never seen anything like their shapes and texture. Their colors, patterns and designs were all new to me, fresh and original. I feasted my eyes on them. They were more beautiful than brightly colored little cakes and up to that time I believed brightly colored little cakes were the most beautiful things I knew apart from my mother's face. The sea shells were more beautiful than little cakes.

They reminded me also of candy, only there, however, they were disappointing. One could put them into one's mouth, but they tasted like chinaware or a rock and actually had no true taste, only a feeling, except for the faintest suggestion of sea salt left on the rough surface of one of the larger shells. They would not have lasted long in our household if they had been edible. One could blow into them or through them, but that was not much fun. That pleasure also was limited. They had been cleaned too, so that they had no smell (which also detracted from their pleasure), except the faint odor of clean porcelain or mother-of-pearl.

But to make up for any shortcomings along those lines, there was the pleasure of handling and feeling them. They were hard and heavy and smooth, light and rough and all combinations of these. Some were stout and some were fragile, but all had a perfectly definite and usually pleasant feel or touch to them. Each shell was a separate and interesting and actual experience by itself. Each shell possessed individuality and all possessed charm. They had a way with them. They had a personality of a sort. I felt that I knew them and always would. They were friends or substitutes for friends or Father.

One thing I learned then and enjoyed learning while playing with shells was to sort and classify them. It was fun to dump

them in a heterogeneous pile on a rug, then begin to sort out similar shells into separate piles.

Early I learned to compare the sizes of similar shells and to arrange them accordingly. I could see that the smaller shells of a given species were obviously younger and the larger ones were identical or similar, only more developed. They had more whorls for one thing, as an older tree had more rings, and I guessed that the animal who had lived in the shell was a larger and older animal, as I myself hoped some day to be. I saw some were broken, cracked, chipped, drilled, beach-worn or otherwise damaged and some were perfect in shape, lip and spire. Some had better color than others, deeper rose, or brighter yellow. Some had more pleasing forms and some had interesting twists and turns and some had scars.

I wondered especially about those scars. What story, what injury lay behind them? Even at that time I could see that there was much to learn about shells and the animals that lived in them. Already I felt that they were like people, distinct identities or separate personalities in their own right, molluscan personalities to be sure, but similar to human beings in many ways and to me at that time equally or possibly even more interesting. It was a world within a world. It was a world in which I was gigantic in size and power and importance. That in itself, that internal gain to me was hugely satisfying, not to mention all the external benefits that accrued to me through possessing them.

When I sorted my shells, I recall that first and most readily recognizable were the cowries. They were always easy. The smooth back and the groove underneath would give a *Cyprea* away under any disguise of pattern, color, or design. Then came the murexes. I could tell them by their bumps, their wrinkles and their spines. Then the lightning shells, all so vividly marked. "You can see the lightning flash on them in zig-zags," one of my sisters said to me observantly. "I see why they call them that." Then the paper fig shells that also gave themselves away. "They are so papery and so figgy," my other sister said. "They look like coarse rag paper or even look like linen. They look like old Egyptian linen from a mummy's case." Then came the moon snails. "They are called shark's eyes or tiger eyes in some places," my father told me. He told me that once deep in the everglades he had seen an image or an idol, possibly, with eyes made of these

shells. "They looked surprisingly like real eyes, too," I recall his saying. "They would follow you around looking at you." Next there were innumerable calico pectens of all sizes and color variations but always the same convex, or nearly flat fan shape. I could go on literally for hours telling you about my early shells, this first box, because the varieties were endless, or so it seemed to me at that time. Actually I suppose that my first collection contained thirty or forty separate genera and a few sub-species of each genus. At that time I knew nothing of class, family, genus and species. They were just so and so and they were alike or different. If you remember your own, if you ever had any, or if you ever get and study some (as I hope you will, if you never have), you will know exactly what I mean, or you can learn to imagine it.

Certain shells stand out in my mind, especially the olive shells. These shells do not exactly look like olives. I do not know why they were named that. As a description it is only approximately accurate to call them olive shells. Mine were almost cylindrical (more than olive shaped) and about as long as a man's thumb. Some were called "Panama" shells because they also were found there. Oddly enough my shells were of the species *Oliva litterata*, the lettered olive, and my father, who found them and sent them to me, was a writer, a literary man. Moreover, these particular shells always bore to me, at least, a strong phallic resemblance. And this resemblance consisted of more than similarity in shape (though not in size) and extended to several details, especially in the shaft, the shank, the shoulder and the spire of the shell. The spire reminded me always of an acorn, at least part of it did. I feel that this genital association and similarity were very important to me at the time, though I was probably unaware of it then. I do not think I would remember the olive shells so vividly and so particularly for any other reason. Thus the olive shell was identified unconsciously by me with an organ given me by my father. The difference was that I was encouraged and not forbidden to take out the shell. And I was allowed to touch and play with it with sanction. It was also something that was generally coveted and admired. All this was the very opposite of what reality afforded me in the way of actual possession and pleasure in regard to that special object with which the olive shell equated.



In that way the olive shell and a few others permitted me an approved way of acting out a considerable number of my repressed wishes under the very noses, so to speak, of my oppressors. I may be wrong about this. It may be retrospective reconstruction, but I don't think so. I think there is something to this and that this among other things may explain my strong interest in shells from an early date up to the present time with variations, of course, on a familiar theme.

Reluctantly I do not tell you of the lion's paw, the lemon yellow pecten, the rose cockle, the yellow cockle, the giant cockle, the angel wing, the turkey wing and a dozen others in more detail.

So much for the episode of my father's shells.

But that was only the beginning. That was not nearly all. There was more to come and soon. I think my interest in the Florida shells partly subsided, or was supplanted by a Flexible Flyer sled, then a red wagon, and later a brown and white pony named "Butterfly." Butterfly had a vicious nature and a strong resentment of a young master who was probably reasonably (or more than reasonably) cruel. The Father shells finally went to the attic in their box. Once in a while I would go up to look at them or play with them, but when last seen they were reposing there, under dust, among outworn things, an old sewing machine, some empty cartons, old rubbers and a dozen piles of back numbers of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Finally one spring, after a housecleaning, these particular shells were given away to the Children's Hospital, and that was the end of them as far as I was concerned. They seemed small to me by then and I had others like them, or better ones.

Then one day a large box arrived. Its arrival caused considerable excitement. It was plastered over with stamps from India and was postmarked *Bombay*. The box bore, as sender, the name of a former Sunday School student in my mother's class, who had left our home town to become a missionary. The box was addressed to my mother, so we waited for her to open it. She did, dividing the stamps among us, my twin sisters and me. Then the box revealed its prize. It was the green shell of a huge snail, larger than any shell I had ever seen, as large as my head. It was in perfect condition having been wrapped first in cotton then packed in straw, and was beautifully cleaned and polished.

It shone, it glittered. The exterior was like the finest Verde marble and the inside was rosy-refulgent, mother of pearl, smooth, perfect, polished, gracefully curled. Imposing in size and dignity, it stood apart like a queen receiving homage from her subjects. It made me think of my mother. It was a thing of grace and beauty. The shell could have been a lovely lady in a sweeping, swirling green dress, her train drawn about her and folded around her body. Perhaps she had been transformed by a magician into a shell as punishment for a misdeed. Many years afterward I learned that the name of this shell was *Turbo Marmoratus* or "marble turban" — I did not know it then. If I had had to name it then, I would have called it "The Green Lady." It was distinctly Mother's shell, but we could look at it, hold it, feel it all over and admire it and talk about it and listen to it, for it had a substantial sound. The roar of the sea, we were told, was caught in it. It had lived in the sea so long that it had caught some of the roar. When you held it to your ear and closed your eyes, its magic sound suggested green waves tumbling over deep water, or surf rolling on yellow beaches where jungle and palm trees met by the shore. One could imagine sharks, octopuses, porpoises, boats and men, natives and steamers, elephants and tigers, who knows — maybe Robinson Crusoe or man Friday himself. Maybe even a shipwreck or some adventure had occurred else how could this shell have come to civilization from so far away? It was so unutterably lovely a symbol of distant and forbidden beauty.

These fantasies, no doubt, are the clue to the deep mystical attraction it held for me. It was Mother's shell but I could touch it and hold it and put my hand (as far as I could) into its aperture. I could hold it to my ear and hear a rushing roar — a sound that I must have listened for since my cradle days. What child, lying in a quiet crib, has not wondered about the world and life, especially the beginning of life? What child has not listened at doors, in hallways, hiding in closets, wondering, guessing, listening? To what child have small noises not been important? And I was always excessively preoccupied with noise. It is small wonder then that this shell belonging to my mother fascinated me. It had a sound.

My mother told me the following story once about my early interest in noise. When I was three years old, someone gave

me a box of crayons and a drawing book. I began to draw the usual formless crude things that children of nursery school age usually begin to draw. I had a dog and a cat, so I drew those — a few lines for legs and body and a few marks for eyes and mouth. And the same way with men and women — like sticks I drew them, putting a skirt on women. Then I drew a sun — a circle with rays. Then I drew a train, for one ran near our house and whistled always for the crossing as it passed. The train I drew crudely also, two lines for tracks, circles for wheels, rectangles for engine and cars; the engine had a smoke stack with a screw or circles of smoke coming out of it — everything was directly represented, a *quid pro quo*, except for a large mass of lines and marks which I drew filling the sky over the locomotive. Those my mother could not understand. She could understand everything else. "What are these?" she asked me. I replied, "*That is the noise.*" It was as simple as that. It was the noise that I heard, so I drew it to represent it and to leave nothing lacking in the total situation, as I experienced it. That was the noise the train made and all noises to me were as vivid and as representable and substantial as that.

To me, the noise in a shell was shaped like the spiral of a shell; it came out like a nude descending the stairs. To me, a shell was like an ear; it was a kind of ear with an echo in it, an ear that heard, that took in, then gave out. In this connection I remember the first phonographs made by Edison — the black wax cylinders, the small box containing the machinery, and the huge horn shaped like a morning-glory trumpet, only vastly larger, where the sound came out. I used to ponder on how Mr. Edison ever caught the noise and how he could reproduce it. Finally I came to realize that somehow he got it in the groove, in the fine wavy line wound round and round the cylinder, like magic, put on and taken off with a needle, like a certain kind of a scratch, like vaccination. We had some records of Uncle Josh and some band records by Sousa and some army bugle calls including *Reveille* and *Taps*. I listened to all these, like the dog who was the trademark of another gramophone or talking machine. I listened to "His Master's Voice" and heard, among other things, the horns of Elf-land faintly blowing, "Blow bugle, blow — Set the wild echoes flying — Answer echoes, answer — Dying, dying, dying." So it was with shells. The noise in them

was important to me. It was their voice, it was the voice of shells, it was the noise that shells make. Noises and voices were important to me.

Things always happened coincidentally. One of our favorite books at that time was titled, "Aunt Martha's Corner Cupboard." It was a book about a woman, beloved by her nieces and nephews, who had a corner cupboard filled with interesting objects which she would produce and describe on suitable occasions. She would tell the children the story about each thing in her cupboard and these stories always fascinated my sisters and me. It was as if we were her nieces and nephews and she were our aunt and she told the stories to us. This was, no doubt, what the author of the book intended and the publisher hoped would happen when our mother read to us from the book. For us the real situation and the book situation were parallel and reenforced each other, each making the other memorable and more memorable. There was Aunt Martha (in her book) and there was Mother in our house, and each had a corner cupboard filled with attractive and interesting things that each would open up and show us and tell us about. And we were the good nieces and nephew in the book, and we were ourselves, which made it all doubly very nice. Of course, in Aunt Martha's corner cupboard there was nothing so splendid as our shell, that is, Mother's shell. Aunt Martha had other things but nothing in her cupboard so alluring as Mother had in hers, so that fact gave us an edge over the characters in the book, which we found very gratifying. We idealized the book, no doubt, but when we came right down to brass tacks and to shells and comparisons, we found we were ahead by at least one shell, Mother's.

Then there was a song that came along about that time. Mother taught it to us, for Mother had been a music teacher and knew many songs. The ones she knew and taught us to sing and play were pleasant and made more sense than some of the songs we were taught at school. Her songs were more understandable and less silly. They were more appropriate. This particular song was especially appropriate and must have been selected by Mother for that reason. She knew, or must have understood, how we felt about her and her shell for she picked

this one out and taught us to sing it. She played the piano as we sang at home:

Down in the cupboard  
That hangs on the wall  
Where Mother's treasures stay  
There is the shell  
That came first of them all  
Over the seas from Bombay.

-----  
Outside it's crinkled,  
And inside it's pink,  
When there's a rainy day  
That is the best time  
To travel, I think,  
Over the seas to Bombay!

That was all there was to the song. The music was lilting and wavy; it fitted the words and the spirit of the song. When we sang it at home, Mother took down the shell and we acted the song out in simple pantomime. I never knew who wrote it. Mother might have, for she could and did write songs and improvised music for plays and skits we acted at home on holidays and birthdays, but this song may have been written a long time before by someone else. There may have been more to it, but those two stanzas were enough for our simple needs. The description did not exactly fit our shell, her shell rather, but we liked the song and sang it and took it to school and introduced it there to the teacher and everyone there sang it and liked it. We got Mother's permission to take her shell to school, which we did, wrapping it in a baby quilt and carrying it in a large basket made of sweet grass, very carefully to and from. After it had been shown, it went back to the cupboard, where it remained and still is, so far as I know.

Quite apart from Father's shells, and Mother's shell, and the book and the song I have told you about there are other associations, interwoven amazingly. There was a trip to Chicago later, when Father was a delegate to a political convention there. He took me with him and it was a happy experience. I was delighted to be allowed the privilege. On the train going up with us was "Uncle Joe" Cannon, an eminent politico of that day, and I met him. Father brought me in and introduced me. I

noticed him, of course, but what I noticed more was a rare golden cowry he wore on his watch chain. I asked him about it and he told me someone had given it to him, a governor of the Philippines, I think he said. It was a mighty group of men and politicians assembled in the club car and that shell was for the moment the object of considerable interest. That impressed me. Some day, I hoped, I might own a golden cowry, an *Aurantia*.

Then there were museums I remember. Whenever I had a chance, I went to them. There was a fine one in Chicago and one in New York, where I saw for the first time a "real" collection of shells beautifully arranged, beautifully displayed and accurately labelled.

In the meantime my own collection had grown. I had added a few shells to it myself from here and there. Friends had given me more. Relatives who knew of my interest remembered me when they took trips and sent or brought me back new shells and duplicates. There was much travelling in and around our family and everyone was generously interested. Thus the event became a repetition and the repetition became a pattern and the pattern became a habit. The element of habit formation as well as the social element entered as part and parcel of my whole experience of shell collection and study. Not only did I do it myself alone, at first, and kept it up spontaneously after it was started, because I liked to do it; but family and friends, knowing of my interest, also expected me to collect and helped me keep at it by showing interest, making contributions and co-operating in various ways. My mother was a talented musician, my father was a prominent author; everyone had something to do or be, some special interest or hobby to follow, to enjoy, to show. So shells became mine. It was a pattern with a mixed design.

There were several motifs: (1) I collected shells — actually hunted them up and searched them out in many ways and places. (2) Then I cleaned, sorted, classified, labelled and studied them. (3) I gave away or swapped duplicates for other shells or other objects. (4) I showed them to people who were interested or whom I liked, which made me feel important. (5) People gave me shells. (6) I began to collect a library of books about shells and thus began to be inducted gradually and indirectly into the study of geography and natural and general



history. (7) Gradually I began to get the feel or develop some faint understanding of general science and logic. I think I understood some of the principles of science before I knew what they were. I realized vaguely that there were these steps: the collection of facts (or shells), then observation and classification of them, then deduction and prediction based on past experience. In studying actual shells and in reading about them I learned these things and more. (8) Shells were an emotional outlet and a help in adjusting to the natural restrictions of my early home and school life. (9) Last (or first), I believe that the study of shells, as a sublimation, aided me in my unconscious efforts to deal with my inner drives. Shells probably represented things I wanted but could not have at that time. Though I did not realize it then, shells afforded me a convenient and constructive catharsis and a focus for libido. They were socially acceptable, progressively educational and generally satisfactory. They were not frustrative. Quite the contrary, by cathexis and by substitution shells probably in my life accidentally happened to serve important infantile or immature needs until those needs were sufficiently strong and mature to reject the substitute and seize upon more satisfactory primary objects when these became personally achievable and socially acceptable. Even the nursery is not really the place for exhibiting, for aggressive acts directed against the body of the father or mother such as mayhem or incest or any of the other irregularities or neurotic aberrations that infantile libido might turn towards if released. So in retrospect then, and in plain view now, and in prospect for some time to come, I feel that it is just as well that I did like shells and that I do like them, for I think it probable I shall keep on liking them.

This, of course, is not the whole story of my interest in shells. It is only a part of it. It is only the beginning of it, and the beginning so far told is only a condensation, an abstract. For the free associations of the mind run so widely that no spider web would serve adequately to illustrate them. Mine, I feel, as I understand them, are like layer after layer of wires in a telephone exchange, or even more packed than Kodak negatives arranged in bundles, in files. I am familiar with the anatomical complexity of the human brain, its intricacy as an organ, its two hemispheres and its important regions, the layers of its

cortex and its main fiber tracts and nuclei. But the richness of imagery and associations such as we find to be stored and sometimes unravelled in the processes of memory leave much to be guessed at when one attempts any correlation between brain and mind. Memories must be laid down, simply considered, in terms of images and feelings. The associational networks, I find, when I start to work with them as I do when writing, defy even my own imagination, which is extensive. One finds from introspective study of oneself, that associations are certainly formed *at the time* they are "laid down," or the thing is experienced; but as time goes on, some sort of further association-work seems to continue in the mind itself. Since I speak here of introspective intangibles, I cannot hope to be objective or definite, yet I hope I may suggest what I mean. It seems to me that, after one experiences something, in thinking it over later, one forms new associations in addition to the ones that were formed in the beginning. I could give examples of this from my own experience, but everyone who is thoughtful could supply them from his own experience. This is especially true in respect to any interest that is sustained over a period of years during a lifetime. In my own experience I can apply these observations to my interest in the collection and study of molluscs. Forel, by the way, said much the same of himself in regard to his study of ants, when commenting later on work he had done after writing *Les Fourmis de la Suisse*.

I have begun the study of shells, spent some time at it and then I have let it rest for a while. I have repeated this off and on. Usually the resting was due to the press of other and more primary interests, or needs, or obligations. Often the latent periods in my study have been rather long — several years at a time. But by study I really mean study: observation of living molluscs in their natural habitat, on the shore, in the sea, or elsewhere, dissection, raising molluscs, simple experimentation, note-taking, correlation, reflective thinking, writing and research into literature — all pursued informally, of course, since I am not and will never be a professional malacologist or conchologist, nor will I ever be able really to know thoroughly the five great branches of the molluscan phylum. However, each time I return to study, collect, observe, or think over the problems of molluscan life, I find that my own associations are richer, better digested and

more interestingly correlated than before. This is not merely a subjective, euphoric, wishfully thought emotion. Those with whom I have studied, with whom I have worked and to whom I have talked about these things tell me that they have observed it too, in me and in themselves. In some ways it is comparable to the following experience many have observed. You have a problem. You don't know what to do about it. You "sleep on it" and later the solution seems obvious. It is as if the mind thought for you while you sleep, which I, for one, believe it does. That, of course, does not imply that I would recommend sleeping as a necessary prelude to the solution of all mental problems, though obviously it is an adjunct in the solution of some. Dr. Joshua Rosett (who was incidentally a conchologist of more than amateur standing) assured me that the mind "thinks for you" all the time, asleep and awake, and he told me of several interesting observations he himself had made along this line that are reported in one of his books on the mind and its functions. Dr. George Waterman, a colleague, has told me the same thing from his own wide experience.

If I were quintuplets, or if I have the choice in another reincarnation, one of me would or shall certainly devote the major portion of his time to the study of molluscan life. I am impressed with the great void one encounters when one comes to the study of the nervous system of molluscs, for example. They have no central nervous system, no brain, so to speak, but they do have interesting ganglia of nerve tissue, or sub-brains, cleverly located, with which they get along very well. I am sure that any student of neurology could gather much valuable information from a study of the molluscan nervous system. The squid, for example, has practically a human eye; and the giant squid (which is believed to weigh many tons) is said to have the largest nerve cells that are known to exist. Some of the single cells in this species are said to be so enormous one can see them with the naked eye. I have never seen one, but reports indicate that this is not a morphological impossibility.

All I meant to do in this paper was to answer one question: Why do I like shells? I have used a mixture of free association and general recollection. All beginnings are little, so I have tried to go down to the roots, at least a few of them, as far as I can reach, with the aid of memory. There is much more yet to come from

periods I have not uncovered. Perhaps some day I shall find time to do it.

In the meantime, to me, however, shells always *speak*, mutely, of course, and "as if." A shell has a quick, precise voice. It says something. It bespeaks its name, its identity, but does it without a sound. It is as if it said, "Here I am, I am a *Strombus pugilis*," or "This is Magellan's scallop," or more simply, "I am myself."

Cleaner than a hound's tooth, more sturdy than an apple, more solid than a brick, more chiselled than a piece of sculpture, more colorful than pottery, a shell defies description, exhausts comparison and abandons superlatives; it is itself. And the "voice" of a shell is only a small part of a shell's charm.

A shell is itself with high honor and dignity, representing lineage whose antiquity makes the human brain whirl and puts mere mortal heredity in the shade. A hundred million years is nothing for a shell to have behind it in genealogy. Many a sea shell could blandly claim that it belongs to a family with 200 fossil species! An ark shell could do that, for example, or a scallop, or a common clam.

In the living realm, consider the family connections of a murex, or a cone shell. I have collected now more than 500 species of cone shells. If I wish to see richness in Nature, variety in pattern and seemingly endless alterations of color and line, all I need to do is to take them out and look at them. Among the riches of the earth I am amazed by molluscan wealth, the treasures of the sea. Neptune rules over a mighty kingdom. More of us earth-bound mortals would do well to pay him court. Sea shells are his emissaries.

## *Children's Books*

### *and their function in Latency and Prepuberty.*

BY KATE FRIEDLAENDER (London)

BOOKS for children have, even in the early days of Psychoanalysis, aroused its interest. Up till now it has chiefly concerned itself with the Fairy-Tale, literature for older children only rarely playing a part in analytical research. Freud<sup>11</sup> points out here, that dream-symbols have their parallel in fairy-tales and mythologies, and shows how the significance of these can become clearer to us by a knowledge of the child's sexual life and phantasies. The unconscious purport in fairy-tales reveals wishes and phantasies originating in the Oedipus-situation,<sup>24</sup> whilst gratification of those wishes and the defence against them figure in a variety of ways during the drama of the narrative. We find repeatedly in analytical literature references to fairy-tale themes in connection with the dreams or memories of patients under analysis,<sup>8</sup> whereby it is seen, that, just as an understanding of the patient's case is rendered easier through a perception of the fairy-tale's inner meaning, so the understanding of the latter is helped through realizing the nature of the patient's conflicts. In her work, Marie Brieht<sup>1</sup> makes the attempt to co-ordinate various fairy-tale themes, each according to its unconscious significance, with the child's different stages of development. It's not only shown that each detail in the development of the Oedipus-conflict finds expression in this or that fairy-tale theme, but the writer also points out that children, left to themselves, will evolve fairy-story day-dreams, lasting often for years, and changing always according to the stage reached in the child's conflicts. Hoffer<sup>15</sup>, too, relates in what ways and degrees the child's unconscious mind may correspond with the unconscious gist of the fairy-tale. One reason, therefore, for the child's love of the fairy-tale is that he finds in it his own instinctual situation and meets again his own phantasies which explains the pleasure in reading or listening to fairy-stories; moreover, the fairy-tales' particular solutions for these conflicts appear to be a means for alleviating anxiety in the child. Analytical research of the latency period has furnished results of a like nature. Edith Buxbaum<sup>5</sup> describes the analysis of a twelve-year-old boy who was an im-

passioned reader of detective stories. She shows how the preference for this type of fiction allows for opportunities of identification with the different *dramatis personae*, and demonstrates in detail how the child's conflict on the one hand, and the unconscious purport of the detective stories on the other, intermingle, and to what extent the child's anxiety may be relieved by the solution set forth in the detective story. Zulliger<sup>27</sup> has made a similar attempt in his "Abenteurer-Schundroman" and pointed out how the unconscious significance of such a story may work in the process of an analysis. He, too, maintains that for the boy patient in question this book proved a means for the overcoming of his fears. Reference to books of the latency age can be found likewise in the work of Anna Freud,<sup>9</sup> who recognizes in certain themes of these books the picture of one of her Ego-defence-mechanisms.

I shall ask, in this paper of mine, why children, in the latency stage particularly, come of their own free will to read books and stories; further, whether the teacher's motive, who directs the child's taste in reading, coincides with the motives of the child, and what mistakes and difficulties may arise through a possible disparity in these several motives. Material for this enquiry is partly drawn from cases in analysis, partly from first-hand observation of children, partly from a research undertaken by Jenkinson<sup>17</sup> on the literature read by some 3000 children in their prepuberty years. In my deductions, and in the conclusions I shall arrive at in this matter of what children read and why, I shall have in view the majority of children and in the usual present-day educational system. Of course, there are outsiders of various kinds to this average cross section, sometimes due to the child's inherent peculiarities of temperament, sometimes to the particular milieu with its specific influence on the child. These "outsiders," which I believe to belong to the class of exceptions, I shall disregard; the framework of this paper not permitting of such scope. For the same reason I shall ignore exceptions in children's literature, such as for instance "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking Glass," and "Gulliver's Travels." These books don't belong to the usual category for children of these age-groups, and demand separate consideration, which indeed has already been given them by others.



The very abundant literature of the latency period may be grouped as follows: family, school, adventure, animal and detective stories, books on sport, and such favourites in England: the popular comics and magazines. To which may be added, in prepuberty, more or less isolated cases of historical and technical books, and, here and there, novels from adult literature. Accurate statistics can be found in Jenkinson,<sup>17</sup> but I shall quote here only certain particulars from these. Jenkinson<sup>17</sup> set out, with the aid of a detailed questionnaire, presented to some 1570 boys and 1330 girls in Secondary and Senior Schools, to ascertain just what kind of books are read by children between the ages of twelve and fifteen. The author was incited to such an investigation by his experiences as a teacher, and by encountering himself the difficulty of teaching literature to children of this age. No single method seemed to succeed in arousing any genuine interest in the children for the literary fare provided them in the classroom. Jenkinson,<sup>17</sup> therefore, concluded that the school syllabus with its choice of classical works and essays, etc., must be unsuitable, and the child's own taste something quite other than the grownup's. After studying the answer to the questionnaire, he comes, first and foremost, to a general decision that both boys and girls of this age, left to their own inclination, read the books of which already a list has been cited, namely, family, school, detective, adventure stories and magazines, while much more rarely, books of travel or those dealing with sport or historical and technical books. It was apparent that within these age groups a definite development could be observed. Family and school stories become clearly less popular as the child grows older; adventure stories, which form over 40% of boys' reading, lose their interest, too, in due course; on the other hand, the demand for detective stories continues to increase as they grow older. Love stories, historical and technical books first begin to attract boys from fifteen onwards. The difference in the book taste of the boys and girls is not very marked. Girls read more than boys, specially more school and love tales, though, to set against this, fewer detective and adventure stories, and technical books.

The literature of the latency period as well as of prepuberty is particularly fertile in books as well as in authors. From the point of view of the schools and other educational authorities, the

majority of these books is of negligible worth. Indeed, there are only exceptional instances in children's books of these days, which like the fairy-tale work of art, could find a place amongst the real literature of the world. Nevertheless, that does not entirely account for the contemptuous attitude shown by education. The fact is, that after the child has reached its ninth year, the chief concern of the adult is to introduce it to a completely different kind of literature; books which contain either instruction or which are of literary value. This aim of education, as Jenkinson<sup>17</sup> has already shown us, is again and again disappointed by the child's own inherent tendencies.

The present paper will seek the causes underlying this contradiction between the child's wish and the educational standpoint. I believe that in approaching the problem one must first put the question, why precisely the types of books already mentioned, and not others, should have such an appeal for children of this age.

I should like to start with an observation, which on first sight may seem to be of little import. An eight-year-old girl, who in school and at home showed some marked interest in history, asking pertinent questions and wanting the answers, just couldn't work up any enthusiasm for "A Child's History of the World."<sup>18</sup> It wasn't as though this book were in any sense beyond her intellectuality. But no, at best, her interest in it could only be described as "respectful." She did read it, indeed, but without a vestige of that keenness so readily accorded other books. Obviously, it disappointed her, although she would love to have the same subject-matter, both related and read aloud to her. We realize, of course, that in story telling, as in reading aloud, the relationship to and the personality of the story teller or reader play an essential role, which is lacking when the child reads to itself. But this fact is by no means a sufficient explanation for the apparent paradox in the case I have mentioned, for, after all, children of this age read other books on their own. Apropos of this, Hillyer,<sup>14</sup> in the introduction to one of his books, describes what steps he took before letting this appear in proof-form. Aware of the difficulty in presenting this particular branch of study so as to be acceptable to children at this stage, he experimented by making the youngsters themselves his critics. So he first read them his book as lectures, chapter by chapter, and

not till he was convinced of their wholehearted appreciation, and their understanding of the subject, did he have his lectures typed.

Great was his astonishment, when the children, on reading this first proof for themselves, no longer evinced any particular interest. This, from a headmaster of a big school, with years of experience behind him, bears out then, that the aforementioned observation has to deal with an exceptional instance, but with a general phenomenon.

Reading, apparently, for children of this age serves a different purpose to that of imbibing knowledge, even when the child of its own accord is eager to learn, and knowledge is presented in a suitable form. Contrariwise, there are children's books of the latency period, read with just as much enthusiasm today as by the former generation, in spite of difference in education of the most far-reaching order. This fact is already familiar to us in the case of the fairy tale. The reason for this appeal must be that these books contain something which keeps them up-to-date in the eyes of the child, a something, which, perforce, is wanting in the history book, no matter how excellently it may be written.

So we are led to believe, then, that these books of the above listed category, exactly as with the fairy-tale, exercise their power of attraction on latency-period children through their emotional content. When, as a grownup, one reads a number of these books, it is impossible not to become aware how the richness and colourfulness of the fairy-tale are gone out, and, instead, what an expression of monotony one now gets. This lack of colour is due to a few particular themes, with extraordinarily slight variations, being repeated over and over again, frequently, indeed, within one and the same book.

For instance, it's most noticeable how constantly the child's environment, in the story, suddenly changes. All at once, from impoverished circumstances the child goes to live in a castle, or vice versa; it leaves home, nursery or guardians for a school life, or leaves a kind relation to be with other people who treat it badly, and, again, the other way about.

In Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper" this changing of the milieu constitutes the chief theme of the romance. The Prince and the Pauper, accidentally, find themselves in each

other's shoes, whereupon follows a description of each boy's experiences in the new strange sphere of life, for which each boy had previously pined. In the end the exchange is made good. Children, when reading this book, are concerned only to reach as quickly as possible the point where the two boys once more assume their own authentic roles. We may be sure the author's interest was rather otherwise focussed; he was hoping by such means to paint a contemporary picture of the highest and lowest conditions prevailing in those days and thereby teaching some social history.

Then there is *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.<sup>3</sup> He suddenly bids goodbye to humble middle-class conditions in America to come to England and the great ancestral home; in the course of the story he is threatened with a return to poverty before being finally established as the rich heir. Or take the "*Little Princess*,"<sup>4</sup> a rich and spoilt child, who simultaneously with the news of her father's death, learns of her sudden loss of fortune. So instead of being, as hitherto, the school's darling, she has to earn her living as a kitchen maid, till, after many vicissitudes, she succeeds in coming into her father's heritage. The tension of this book is particularly heightened and sustained by the fact that the father's friend, who is searching for the child the world over, for months lives actually next door to her, without ever knowing it. At night his servant changes the bare attic of the kitchen maid into the room of a palace; in the morning the carpets and other furnishings are taken away again, so that the dramatic change is of a daily recurrence. Then again there is "*Heidi*"<sup>25</sup> who leaves her grandfather's mountain hut to go to live in the rich nobleman's house in Frankfurt. In many stories this change of circumstances is not so stressed, sometimes it will be only hinted at, but it hardly ever is altogether absent. Seemingly, too, one of the charms of school stories lies in this same constant change of setting of the child-hero or heroine.

Another point in common, and to be found again almost exclusively in books of the early latency time is the typical family situation. Only one parent is living, usually, but not always, the one of the opposite sex, or both parents are dead and the child lives with a relation. *Lord Fauntleroy* lives with his mother, *Heidi* with her grandfather, the *Little Princess* with her father and later, with her father's friend. Generally speaking the family

situation is thus constituted from the outset of the story; in any case it's a minor detail even if the death of the other parent doesn't occur till later on in the story. Relations between child and father, or with its mother, are usually particularly good, the boy replaces the father, the girl her mother, and the grown-ups fall in very agreeably with this substitution. If the heroine of the story is a girl, then it may happen that she is sometimes the eldest of a large family whom she mothers.

Another oft-recurring theme is the "taming" of bad and intractable grownups, through the child's goodness and innocence and its fearlessness and belief in the excellence of the adult. "Heidi" converts her grandfather and turns him into a sociable being again; in the same way Lord Fauntleroy succeeds with the tyrannical Earl, who is held in such universal fear. The school-mistress's spitefulness quite fails to impress the "Little Princess," so that it ends in the mistress being afraid of the child instead of the other way round. In adventure stories this taming of the hostile outside world plays a big role, though, to be sure, it's rather differently worked out.

A further peculiarity shared by these books and which surely accounts too for the boredom produced on the adult, is to be found in the characterdrawing of these child heroes and heroines. These are, usually, from the beginning of the story very good, very brave and very moral. "Lord Fauntleroy," "Heidi" and the "Little Princess" display a triumph of ethical qualities which even the severest teacher in his most extravagant dreams couldn't hope to improve upon.

These few basic themes, meagre as they are, supply the scaffolding for most books of the early latency years; to some less frequently appearing themes reference will be made later on.

As already related, analytical study of the fairy-tale has proved that its emotional content presents the Oedipus wishes and propositions for combating these, or in other words, this unconscious content of the fairy-tale tallies with the conflicts pertaining to the child's age. When one pays closer attention to the above mentioned themes in children's books of the latency period, it is not hard to recognize in them some universal phantasies and defence-mechanisms which are characteristic in the child's development at the beginning of latency.

The instinctual situation of the normal child during the



latency period is somewhat as follows: the Œdipus conflict becomes weakened, partly through repression of the incestuous wishes, partly through identification with the parent of the same sex. The physical expression of the sexual urge, masturbation, after much struggle, becomes entirely or partially repressed, masturbatory phantasies undergoing further change and finding outlet in daydreams. The building up of the Super-Ego continues to advance with the help of sublimations, reaction-formations and identifications. The energy for the forming of these mechanisms is derived from the sexual and aggressive instincts. The Ego's adaptation to reality continues to grow, it assumes new functions, while in its defence-mechanisms a further development and elaboration are taking place. In actual every day life lessons and school become the central point of interest, while towards the end of latency the child begins to detach itself more from the parents. The conflicts of these stages of development manifest themselves in certain universal phantasies which one can compare with the universal phantasies of childhood.

Freud has described the most striking of these phantasies as the neurotic's "Family-Romance." This fantasy has its origin in the innate urge for separation from the parents and receives its driving force from disillusionments which evoke the child's criticism and challenge him to make comparisons to the disadvantage of his parents. This fantasy, which is sometimes to a certain extent conscious, of course bears the recognizable signs of the old unconscious Œdipus phantasies, so that, for example, the boy evinces more hostility towards the father, the girl towards the mother. External and accidental factors can give occasion to this fantasy wish, as when there is acquaintance with people of a higher social standing. At the same time the disillusionment as to the infallibility of its own real parents which has meanwhile made itself felt, will be largely dispelled since the fantasy attaches itself to the new parents who figure there as omnipotent.

Variations of this fantasy are fairly easily to be recognised in the latency book theme first under discussion: i.e., the child of poor circumstances is suddenly transported to a palace, or leaves those who have brought it up for quite another entourage etc. As already stated, this change motive is seldom altogether



absent; which finding is in complete agreement with Freud's assumption that the family-romance, though in truth a phantasy particularly observable in the neurotic, is scarcely ever missing in the normal healthy child. In ratio, then, to the frequency with which this change motive repeats itself in a book, is the tension, naturally, increased for the child.

The typical family situation has been described as the second continually recurring theme. The child replaces the deceased parent and in so doing a successful identification is represented. The wicked step-mothers of the fairy-tale have vanished, but eventually one meets them again in the later latency books as nurse, schoolmistress, etc. In connection with this it is quite interesting to note how the narrowminded, but kindly disposed governess in the book "Heidi" has been made a sort of witch in the film, the latter thus reverting more to the fairy-tale, and, therefore, better adapted to younger children. A partial fulfilment of the oedipal wish is contained in this typical family situation — the parent of the same sex is dead, but there are no conflicts existing because of the death. It is a matter of the oedipus wish getting its ideal fulfilment, with repression of all aggressive tendencies, which in the fairy-tale still play the principal role. We see the partial sublimation of the former instinctual wishes in successful identification and perceive the partial fulfilment of the old aggressive tendencies in the non-existence of the parent of the same sex.

The third theme, the good child's taming of the grownup, has been described by Anna Freud<sup>9</sup> as an example — namely "The Denial in Phantasy" — of an Ego-defence-mechanism. She explains, proceeding from the phobia of "Little Hans," how the displacement of the father-image on to that of a feared animal can still not be called the starting point of the neurosis, since such displacements figure largely in the child's normal development. She recounts different animal phantasies of children, in which the wild animal, having first been tamed by the child, then becomes its protector. This mechanism serves to overcome the real and actual fear of the father, in allusion to which she points out, how children's books, for example "Little Lord Fauntleroy" make use of this mechanism. Anna Freud<sup>9</sup> lays emphasis on the part played by this mechanism in many children's books, making reference to two. I can but corroborate

this, and stress how large a role this theme plays in the greater number of books of the early latency period, and what especial pleasure it seems to afford the child. Also in books of the later latency period this theme is still of some importance.

The exaggerated moral characters of the child heroes and heroines, particularly pronounced in books of the early latency period, reflect the high, unfulfilled demands of the Ego-Ideal, the earlier struggles and conflicts having ceased to exist.

I think it has become clear how these latency books, just as in the case of the fairy-tale, represent a faithful mirror of the conflicts corresponding to the child's age, and, in the same way, suggest solutions conformable with the Ego's development. According to the difference in the child's emotional life at this period, we find a parallel difference in the emotional background of the books as compared with the fairy-tales. In the books of the early latency period instinctual claims no longer come into the open, gratifications of the component instincts have disappeared, cruel killings, violent forms of death are no longer encountered, and the wicked stepmothers and witches have departed. It's true, we do still, and continually, come upon fulfilled instinctual wishes, but, generally speaking, it is the fully accomplished identification and the successful sublimation which are represented along with the functions of the Ego's defence-mechanisms, these taking the place of the direct and external suppression of the instincts.

I should like to draw attention here to a further superficial likeness between the character of the early latency books and that of children of the same period. It has been already remarked how these same books make tedious reading for the grownup and that they rank low as literature. Similarly then, as we are reminded by Anna Freud,<sup>10</sup> the small child who, with its wealth of imagination, the lucidity and logic displayed in its questions and powers of reasoning, can often be really astonishing, later, on reaching school age, may seem to the grownup quite dull, superficial and commonplace.

A less generally widespread theme should now be briefly considered. In certain children's books there will be a lame child who, either through its own resources or due to the aid of other children, learns to walk again. Or, maybe, it is a blind child who recovers its sight. Clearly these are instances of a phantasy

concerning the restitution of the penis. Frequently the children are girls; in Burnett's "The Secret Garden" it is a boy, whose homosexual attitude to the father provides the tale with its focal point. Another aspect of the phantasy is to be seen in numerous books about riding which feature so prominently in English children's literature and which, in my experience, are especially read by girls. The principal theme most often to be met with is that of a girl who has set her heart on having a pony, which desire is finally realized. The same theme appears in boy's books in the form of absolute fearlessness on the part of the child in the face of every possible kind of danger. This naturally prepares the way for the typical books for boys of the later latency period, that is to say, adventure stories.

As shown by Jenkinson's<sup>17</sup> investigations, children's reading of the later latency period and prepuberty changes only in the predominance of one or another group of books, not in the quality of the selection. It would lead us too far to go into all the phantasies of all these groups of books. A detailed enquiry of Jenkinson,<sup>17</sup> however, makes it possible for us to examine the analogies existing in the child's instinctual life and its choice of books in prepuberty. In this enquiry, the selection from the so-called adult literature and the popularity of these various books is ascertained by percentages, boys and girls being separately classified. The result of this was to show that the most popular books for boys, of these combined ages between 12-15, were "David Copperfield"<sup>18</sup> and "Treasure Island,"<sup>20</sup> while for girls "David Copperfield" and "Jane Eyre."<sup>22</sup>

We shall presume from our previous findings that these books are singled out from a very considerable number of other novels, because they probably offer children phantasies corresponding to theirs, and in the least disguised manner. It would exceed the scope of this paper to undertake a complete analysis of the emotional content of these works, therefore certain themes must have special consideration to the neglect of others, with indication, eventually, as to their points in common.

Now what is, in the ordinary course of events, the psychic situation of children about the age of thirteen? Naturally, conflicts and phantasies are no longer the same as at the beginning of latency. Under the pressure of physiological maturing, and, thereby, of the renewed flaring-up of sexual desires, con-

flicts which were repressed during latency, now receive fresh impetus. Whilst during the earlier stage of latency, the psychical task for children of either sex, from the viewpoint of psychic economy, is the same, that is to say, the repression of conflicts, the sublimation of instincts, and the building up of defence-mechanisms, with the approach of prepuberty and the attendant rekindling of the instinctual life, come once more to the fore. Latency, for the boy, follows the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, effected by means of the castration fear. The strong sexual strivings for the possession of the mother, and the aggressive tendencies against the father are in part repressed, in part sublimated, while they have undergone certain transformations through the workings of the defence-mechanisms. The remainder of the old instinctual situation, however it may have shaped itself, becomes freshly imbued with energy in prepuberty. In the phantasies, which now emerge, one can recognize in what way the Oedipus complex has been dealt with.

"Treasure Island" stands for the typical adventure story whose phantasies suggest a possible denouement of the Oedipus conflict, or rather be it said, whose phantasies answer to a definite phase in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. The boy, who is about fifteen, leaves his mother to be taken on by a party of men in their hunt for treasure. Owing to good luck, bravery, disobedience to orders, no matter what, he learns of the treasure's whereabouts, discovers the conspiracy among the pirates, comes repeatedly to the rescue of his fellows, and outwits the most dreaded of the pirates. He saves his own life by intimidating the pirate ringleader — this slip of a boy — with the news of how he, the youngest of them all, has been the one, right from the start, to see through and to foil his plottings. The boy, in these ways, measures his strength with his father's, the father image being represented by various good and bad characters in the story, and so becomes acknowledged by all as a rival on an equal footing. This phantasy overshadows everything else, the original cause of the rivalry, the competition for the mother, getting altogether pushed into the background. The homosexual attitude to the father which constitutes a significant phase in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, seems to be the unconscious content of many adventure stories.

In contrast to the boy, the girl enters the latency period with

an attachment, still sexual in character, to the father, and still harbouring hostile feelings against the mother, and with more or less of a penis-envy as the case may be. We have seen that books of the latency period, containing this phantasy of the penis-envy, appear to be particularly favoured by girls. It is probably, amongst others, a similar phantasy which makes "Jane Eyre" such a favorite with girls in prepuberty.

I have elsewhere<sup>12</sup> dealt at length with the phantasies as revealed by Charlotte Brontë in her life and novels. In "Jane Eyre," designated by the authoress as autobiographical, these phantasies break through in almost barefaced fashion. An insignificant, seemingly unattractive girl wins the love of a man twenty years her senior and of higher social standing in whose house she has the post of governess. Her relationship to Rochester portrays the fulfilment of the Œdipus wish in a relatively undisguised form. Indeed, a special point is made of the fact that Rochester could be Jane's father and of the filial feelings she entertains for him. He is married to a woman who is demented, and keeps this marriage, which he does not acknowledge, secret. Despite the subordinate and despised position which Jane holds in Rochester's house, and her insignificant appearance and inexperience, she manages, in very short time, to gain complete mastery over this selfwilled, autocratic man. Alongside of a masochistic devotion she makes full and conscious use of this power of hers. When Rochester has lost his right hand and his eyesight, and so is rendered quite helpless, Jane becomes his wife. These afflictions have been brought about by his first wife in a transport of madness, whereby she meets her own death. In conjunction with the Œdipus phantasy we see here a working out of the penis-envy, found not infrequently in the analysis of women and which has been described by Fenichel.<sup>7</sup> The penis is stolen and the little insignificant woman herself becomes the penis, without which the man cannot exist. Jane is Rochester's sole link with the outside world; through her he sees and receives his impressions, without her he is helpless. Only after Jane has a child, hereby obtaining the penis by other means, does he, to a certain extent, recover his sight. Interwoven with this phantasy is another, sadomasochistic in character and of peculiar quality and intensity, which, without a doubt, spells special fascination for the young reader. The part dealing with



Jane's childhood reflects a perpetual struggle between submission to and revolt against this masochistic phantasy; also in the love scenes with Rochester a devotion one can only term masochistic, and willing surrender alternate with the sadistic urge for ascendancy.

As mentioned before, direct sadistic and masochistic instinctual gratifications have disappeared from the books of the early latency period. What we here see reappearing is the instinctual gratification, worked out in modes of behaviour and events, apparently attributable to destiny, which corresponds to the transformation of the original masturbatory phantasies in the day-dreams of older children.

Moreover, we find in "Jane Eyre" our old family romance. Jane is an orphan, brought up by an aunt, who sends her, by way of punishment, to a school of extreme severity. When years have gone by, an uncle suddenly turns up, leaving her a big legacy. Then, when in distress and homeless, Jane happens on some exceptionally kind and enlightened people who are later discovered to be her own relations. Although this book is partly accurate autobiography, none of these occurrences answers to the actual facts, Charlotte Brontë, even after her marriage, not having left the parental roof. Thus it seems as though we were concerned here with the authoress's own family romance.

It is also the opinion of the art-critic that "Jane Eyre" ranks as a classic rather on account of its emotional power than for its artistic merit. Certainly, it is the emotional background, and in particular, not forgetting the *Cædipus* phantasy, the sado-masochistic phantasy and the working out of the penis-envy, which make this book so beloved of girls in prepuberty. One may presume that it is the relative absence of disguise in this phantasy's portrayal, and because of its intensity, which distinguish this book from other novels with similar phantasies.

It is certainly no coincidence that "David Copperfield," the book held dearest by both sexes in prepuberty, should also be autobiographical, indeed Dickens's only autobiographical novel and of his own works the author's favourite. In this novel we find again almost all the phantasies already under review; the family-romance, the typical family-situation, and a sado-masochistic phantasy, represented in the relations with the stepfather, at school and in the factory, while in the first marriage



with a woman very clearly characterised as the mother-image can be recognised the Œdipus wish. Indeed, these phantasies play only a subordinate part in the novel; its incomparable character-drawings hold the foreground, but according to my experience, the childhood episodes and when David is still a youth, make this book what it is for children. They will very often skip the parts about the Micawber family.

Children's editions of "David Copperfield" take into account the young reader's tastes. One of the most popular editions<sup>14</sup> describes David's childhood adventures up to the time of his flight to Betsy Trotwood. Through simplification of language and omission of drawn-out detail, we behold a typical children's book suited to prepuberty, with special emphasis on the masochistic phantasy and all the details which we ascribe to the phantasy of the family-romance.

I believe that the point of view, arrived at in the above discussion, finds confirmation by the fact that these novels are preferred to other books because of the phantasy-content's reference to this particular stage of the child's emotional life. According to the progress in the child's inner development, we see in these books, as compared with the books of the early latency period, the reappearance of old conflicts in their new form. The heroes and heroines have to struggle once more, but the struggle has become one of conscience much more than with the outside world, the crude expressions of sadistic and masochistic instincts appear in the disguised form of a sadomasochistic phantasy. The family-romance and the typical family-situation, as well as the taming of the hostile outside world are still important attractions. A point in common is to be noticed in these books, the hero being at the outset (in "Treasure Island" throughout), a child. As I have mentioned, both "Jane Eyre" and "David Copperfield" are autobiographical novels. In this connection I should like to point out that it seems to be an integral part of an autobiographical novel that the author's own typical latency phantasies or day-dreams should be interwoven in the recording of his childhood. E. Kris<sup>20</sup> describes a formula in the life history of plastic artists in which the family romance is recognisable as a fundamental factor. A similar formula seems to be at play in the autobiographical novel. The above particulars have been mentioned only in so far as they explain the appeal of these

books for children of this age; a further pursuance of this problem would overstep the limits of the present lecture.

To return to the incident of my introductory observation: the reason for the little girl's being unable to read the history book with any great interest lies in its failure to provide sufficient phantasies for her stage of development. This seems to give force to our argument that at this age the function of reading is still not concerned with acquiring knowledge, but, as is characteristic of the child's attitude to the fairy-tale, looks for gratification of the instinctual life. Observations of patients reveal yet another similarity between the child's attitude to a more advanced stage of reading and that of its earlier days with respect to the fairy-tale. Very often one finds themes from books of the latency period which, in like manner to those of the fairy-tale, have become interwoven in a patient's memories. This can come about in the two following ways: either a phantasy fully developed and conscious is met with in a story, or there exist the unconscious elements for forming a phantasy, which may become conscious through contact with a phantasy encountered in reading.

Thus it was impossible for a ten-year-old girl to express her penis-envy by any means whatsoever till, one day, she began to confide her wish, much spun-out with phantasies, to have a pony given her by her mother. But the phantasy always ended with the child's own embargo on her wish, and this quite regardless of logic when the wherewithal and everything necessary to the upkeep of a pony all pointed in its favour. A book had given occasion to the pony phantasy. Of course, the penis-envy was operative before the reading of the story, but evidently it needed the help of the phantasy thus encountered to bring it to expression. Coinciding with this the child voiced for the first time her grief at not being a boy. One finds frequently among adult patients that an impression is still left by those books of the latency time, which contained the phantasy, under whose influence they still continue to live.

One can hardly fail to attach some value to Jenkinson's<sup>17</sup> research-work on 3000 children, although in these statistics certain individual cases must necessarily be overlooked. My enquiry too, as I should like once more to emphasize, has to keep to the mainroad, and must be concerned with the majority

of children in this question of how and by what means the function of reading develops. There are some further instances observed by Jenkinson<sup>17</sup> which give support to the belief that reading as a source of instinctual gratification extends to puberty. He found, that when children read a lot, their reading, especially about the age of fifteen and onwards, includes historical and technical books as well as a good selection of novels and plays, whereas with children who read little, the choice of what he calls "better literature" is also more limited. Moreover, in comparing the curricula of different schools, he finds that children's interest in reading develops independently of stimulus in the classroom. Jenkinson infers, therefore, that this reading of the so-called trash in prepuberty is an inevitable phase of development for children of this age, through which, apparently, every child passes. The fruitful time for instruction in real literature does not begin till after the fifteenth year. Jenkinson expresses surprise that opposition to the literature preferred by children remains so strong that, even in modern educational methods, when in other respects the authorities let themselves be guided by the child's own inclinations, no allowance is made in the school syllabus for this kind of literature, and adult tastes are still impressed upon the children. Not once does it seem to have occurred to anyone in authority, in spite of the immense difficulties which the teacher without exception has to contend with in his literature courses for these age groups, that the literature itself may not be well adapted.

We are acquainted with the emotional nature of this attitude of educational authorities towards children's literature. Hoffer<sup>18</sup> explains that the disapproval of the fairy-tale as literature for the small child on the part of certain educational circles does not arise from the alleged rational motive, which accuses the fairy-tale of being false to reality, but originates in the disapproval of the instinctual life portrayed by it. But, as Marie Briehl<sup>1</sup> shows, the alleged harmful effects in no wise correspond to the facts, so that quite to the contrary, the fairy-tale when appropriate to the particular stage of development in the child, can definitely help it in overcoming its conflicts.

Parents and teachers betray the same attitude with regard to the child's own reading as to masturbation: memories of their own experiences at this age are denied, the child is charged

with wrong-doing and henceforth the books can only be read in secret, which certainly cannot improve matters. But indeed, we do not need to look to the adults to find this contempt for tales which have become discarded. Children themselves behave in exactly the same way. Scarcely is the fairy-tale stage over when the child declares it to be ridiculous. Pipal<sup>23</sup> refers to the scorn shown by children from eight to ten for the previously beloved fairy-tales. A nine-year-old boy who the year before would read and re-read "Little Lord Fauntleroy" with passionate devotion, suddenly pronounced it absolutely stupid, adding that never in the world could there be such a good boy: in fact, he was just awfully boring and disagreeable. With similar scorn children frequently look back on mastered conflicts, especially when they still feel none too sure of themselves in the newly attained stage. The child's attitude to fairy-tales and stories of the latency period is the same: attraction as long as the emotional content suffices its own needs, contempt once the emotional phase is outgrown.

We have likened a certain attitude to that which is shown to masturbation. More can be made of this comparison. What strengthens the adult in his opinion that the reading of such literature should be forbidden, is the plain fact that instinctual gratification derived from it can clearly be observed in the child while reading or listening. Pipal<sup>23</sup> gives a report on the statements of children about their sensations when reading "Lovely stories" from which it becomes quite evident that some children literally masturbate, whilst others develop masturbatory equivalents. With many children, as in the case cited by E. Buxbaum,<sup>5</sup> the reading of this "trashy" literature becomes an obsession. Everybody knows the struggle with children reading at night, which parents are so keen to forbid, because of the damage to the eyes, and of the covert reading of children in school.

We have now viewed the subject of the child in relation to its undictated book tastes from two angles. On the one hand I have tried to show how the child feels itself drawn to those books containing the phantasy with which the child itself is engaged. These phantasies, by their derivation from day-dreams, still testify to their original connection with masturbation. From the presented material the conclusion can be drawn that for a

great number, perhaps the majority of children in latency and prepuberty, this bit of instinctual gratification provides the impetus for reading, and for this reason the choice of books is such and no other. On the other hand the adult's attitude toward the typical literature of this period is such as to lead one to suspect that the kinship of this activity with the realm of instinctual gratification, in particular of that of masturbation, must be known to them.

I have tried to indicate how, up to puberty, the child is motivated in its spontaneous reading of books and stories, by the instinctual gratification that can be got from these. According to the psychic structure and the age of the child, the pleasure thus obtained is still very near to the sexual pleasure gained from masturbation or it is already in process of becoming a little more detached from direct instinctual gratification.

Now what happens to this Ego-function after puberty? As we know, the function of reading, when puberty is over, remains sexualised for a considerable percentage of people for whom it is still a means of gratification for phantasies and day-dreams. Even when sublimation in this realm has been highly successful, traces of the original function of reading can still be discovered: I have only to mention the reading of detective stories. If the claims of the Ego-Ideal are out to make reading a desexualized Ego-function and this development is only partly successful, disturbances of work can arise which one finds not infrequently in the analysis of intellectuals. There is difficulty in summoning the concentration necessary to the serious preparatory reading for the work on hand. The temptation to weave phantasies, or better to say, the temptation to masturbate, which can normally be suppressed, breaks through just at this point. In disturbances of this kind, it is not a question, as is sometimes assumed, of a secondary sexualisation of the intellect, but rather of an inhibition or arrest in development. Such manifestations become the easier to understand when it is borne in mind for what length of time reading serves exclusively as a source of instinctual gratification, so that this achievement within the desexualised ego-functions is, by comparison, only late; indeed, very often, this sublimation altogether miscarries.

If it is true that the development of reading to a fully desexualised ego-function runs along the lines here suggested,



then these should lead us to some conclusions concerning education.

I put the question, earlier in this lecture, whether the child's motives, which incite it to read during latency period and prepuberty, and those of the teacher, bent on directing its tastes, square with one another. It has been shown that the child still reads for gratification's sake, whilst the teacher expects a desexualised interest. From this difference of motive arise misunderstandings which can only hinder the development of this ego-function to its desexualised form, or leastways, not for its advancement. I have spoken of the disapproving attitude of the majority of grownups to the typical literature of this period which takes effect in various educative measures, from outright prohibition to the attempt to impose upon the child that kind of books agreeable to the adult motives.

To forbid the reading of typical latency and prepuberty literature can only produce similar effects as called forth by the former forbidding of masturbation; it depends of the child's psychical structure and its previous experiences how it deals with this later ban. Such prohibitions, meaning, as they do, a re-emphasis of those which were once directed against masturbation, will but work to the detriment of the further development of this intellectual activity.

Attempts to alter the child's tastes have confined themselves partly to providing it with adult literature. As we have seen, children pick out from this, too, those particular novels which, with the least concealment, contain their own phantasies. It can be doubted whether there is much gained in giving a child a standard literary work from which it simply picks out the phantasies, disregarding the rest. An attempt of another kind is concerned in supplying children with realistic books, based on the idea that literature, which is "unreal" in its character, has an unfavourable influence on the child's development. From explanations already given, it has been proved that this opposition between "realistic" and "phantastic" does not go to the root of the matter. The point is, that if a book is to be read with any appreciation at all by children, it has to contain those phantasies relative of their stage of development. Whether the book is otherwise realistic or phantastic does in no way influence the child. I should like to refer here, by way of example, to the re-



alistic book "Emil and the Detectives," which children have welcomed into their literature with open arms.

Despite its realism, we find, once again, all our phantasies in this book, with indication of the family-romance in Emil's leave-taking when he visits the big city. As usual, there is no father, Emil's having died young, so the son takes over his place and becomes his mother's invaluable right hand. The very reverse to a molly-coddle, he is a high spirited, manly youngster, full of ingenuity and up to all manner of pranks. To get the better of the thief, he no longer needs to be tradition's paragon of virtue, but succeeds through his resourcefulness and the use of his keen wits. Actually, he does get renowned after a fashion, but instead of the mythical million, is enriched by the gift of fifty well deserved marks. In this book the usual phantasies are no longer represented without disguise, but have been worked upon so that they stand removed, to a certain extent, from the original phantasies. Owing to this, probably, the artistic standard is a higher one. Such indeed was the aim prompting the spread of this realistic literature, but children do not take to a great number of these books. With the reason of this, we are now conversant; a book will only really appeal to children when, in one way or another, it supplies the usual phantasies.

Taking this consideration into account, it is possible, occasionally to find a book for children which, at the same time, satisfies their reading for pleasure, and yet does not ignore the requirements of education. Not only can the artistic standard of a book be improved on, as in the case of "Emil and the Detectives," but also all kinds of knowledge can be imparted within the framework of the usual phantasies. Books such as this have been written. I should like to mention the *Twin-Books*,<sup>22</sup> intended for children from six to nine. Here, in the guise of very delightful tales, where, in greater or lesser degree, the usual phantasies do not fail to appear, we find a really considerable amount of information about foreign countries. These books are simply loved by children. Or take the books of Jules Verne for older children, in which the phenomena of natural science are related in the setting of adventure stories, or again a book like the "Scarlet Pimpernel,"<sup>21</sup> where historical events find record in the exceptionally charming presentation of a rescue-phantasy (*Rettungsphantasie*).

My advice therefore, put briefly, as to what attitude education should adopt with regard to children's reading in the latency period and prepuberty, is roughly as follows: I believe one should avoid prohibitions of every possible kind, since these, for the above-mentioned reasons, can interfere with the development of reading toward a more desexualised Ego-function. I do not think there is any value in introducing children too early to literature, which not only in its style of writing, but also in its contents, takes no account of the psychic stage of development of the child. Bearing in mind what stimulates the child to read, it will be the best way to let the child follow its inclinations, giving at the same time such books which, while providing phantasies to correspond to its particular phase of development, yet combine with these the value of either being instructive or of having artistic merit.

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